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EMPIRICISM AND PLATONISM IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

TO THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM JAMES

ERNST TROELTSCH

UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG

During the lifetime of William James, his philosophical work, closely connected as it is with many traditions of British philosophy, made a marked impression—one might almost say, a stir—on the Continent of Europe. Since his death, obituary notices and comprehensive reviews of his philosophy have made the intellectual legacy of the departed thinker the object of still greater attention, the more because, outside of the pragmatic school itself, the interest in the writings of so fine and penetrating a mind as Bergson naturally extends itself to cognate movements of thought.

In this legacy, James's philosophy of religion stands out with special prominence, partly by reason of its contrast to the type of philosophy of religion which is traditional on the Continent of Europe, partly because of the wealth of his own new and valuable suggestions, which have been added to by a number of zealous followers. It may not be uninteresting, therefore, to the readers of this *Review*, if I try to characterize what is peculiar and new in this, the first thorough-going contribution from America to the philosophy of religion. In doing so, I shall discuss two points: *first*, the contrast between James's ideas and the European philosophy of religion; and, *second*, the positive value that the new ideas which thus emerge seem to me to have.

Before I undertake to define the difference, I must, however, point out what is common to the two systems. This common

element is, in fact, more extensive and significant than appears in James's own writings. The differences lie within the bounds of presuppositions common to both, and are not fundamental; the essential unity of the intellectual work of the modern civilized world is fully maintained. For James's philosophy of religion—and this is the common characteristic—is a true *philosophy* of religion, that is to say not a one sided sectarian or theological treatment of the subject. As with us the philosophy of religion is distinguished from the theology of the churches by setting out, not from a given theological norm of truth, but from the whole wide field of religious phenomena, so also with James. He, too, considers religion as a vast sphere of phenomena common to all mankind, within which no presumption lies in favor of minor individual circles. The goal, moreover, like the point of departure, is determined for him by no outside authority or dogma, but he compares and appraises the phenomena with entire freedom, according to a standard which the philosopher himself has first to discover and justify. The problem of this standard contains in itself, as we shall see, the difficulties which are most intrinsic to the philosophy of religion. In what has been said the third common trait has already been implied: his discrimination and his appraisal do not assume the supernaturalism of the church, nor set off a Jewish-Christian region of miracles over against a natural region devoid of the miraculous. It is the more important to emphasize this, because James himself repeatedly and positively professes adherence to supernaturalism and dualism, and by no means rejects miracles. Supernaturalism is for him, however, no exclusive attribute of Christianity, but pertains to every religion, and simply means the repudiation of rationalism and monism with their faith in law. The miraculous in James's sense has nothing to do with the miracles of Christian legend and theology. Faith in a divine government of the world, he says in one place, "of course means 'miraculous' interposition, but not necessarily of the gross sort our fathers took such delight in representing, and which has so lost its magic for us. . . . Signs and wonders and convulsions of the earth and sky are not the only neutralizers of obstruction to a god's plans of which it is possible to think." For the same reason natural religion means

for him the religious experiences received from the beauty and splendor of nature, in contrast to those which proceed from nature's hidden background and belong to Neoplatonism and Buddhism as much as to Christianity.

All this, however, imports the large conception of the philosophy of religion which has taken shape from the time of Herder and Schleiermacher, Spinoza and Hume. Setting aside every personal belief, the thinker addresses himself to the whole broad range of the actual psychological facts of religion, and, starting from the observation and analysis of these, tries to attain to normative forms of faith; leaving it the while an open question whether there are any such forms and what character they will turn out to have. Emancipation from the beliefs we happen to have inherited, comprehensive comparison of all the phenomena, determination of the meaning and content of religious phenomena by means of analysis, inquiry into the conditions under which a standard of judgment is to be framed—all this James also assumes as the only living presupposition, or "working hypothesis," in contrast to which ecclesiastical apologetics with its argument from miracles, whether it lays the greater stress on the external or the internal miracle, is a dead hypothesis.

The characteristic difference, then, must be sought within the sphere of the common presupposition; for, so far as the latter is concerned, James is distinguished from others solely by the fact that to him the presupposition presents itself as the only vital working hypothesis at present available, whereas we see in it the demand of reason, asserting itself as soon as the constraint of inherited prejudice is withdrawn. In this distinction, indeed, a hint is already given of the contrast between the two modes of thought. But it is only a hint, and, as for its effect on the thought as a whole, the difference is for the moment negligible; the result is the same in either case. The real difference can be made essentially clear only at the main point, namely, where the principle of psychological analysis and its consequences comes in. But that can be done only when we have first made clear the fundamental characteristic of the European philosophy of religion.

This fundamental characteristic may be described in a single

word as Platonic or Neoplatonic. The whole of European philosophy and science stands essentially under the influence of Platonic rationalism. This in turn presupposes, to be sure, the subjectivism and relativism of the Sophists, and in so far has its roots in empiricism; but at the same time its consistent aim is to transcend the merely actual through the demonstration that, seething and developing within it, is a rationally necessary conceptual element. Platonism proper understood these concepts only as thought-engendered intuitions and abstractions of the genuinely ideal; and it never seriously attempted to elucidate their essential reality, their relation to the experience that elaborates and contains them, their derivation from an ultimate rational basis, or rational law, of the universe. That advance was made in part by Aristotle, who taught that idea and law are immanent in experience, and derived them from the rational principle of the world by the use of the ideas of purpose and of organic development toward the cosmic principle. Neoplatonism then attached this development still more firmly to the cosmic principle by teaching that the descent from pure intangible superempiric ideality down to the world of experience is made on a kind of ladder of ideas, and that the reascent comes about through a growing knowledge of these ideas as realities. Stoicism, despite its original empiricism, eventually approximated in its theory of knowledge and its metaphysics to these same views, through its idea of a universal cosmic law governing nature and spirit, so that for European philosophy Stoicism was able to fuse with the two first-mentioned types.

This system of thought controlled all the philosophy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The relativism of the Sophists, the scepticism which appeals to the multiformity of the actual, the whole troop of radical subjectivism and empiricism, were completely routed by the Platonic school; only occasionally and uncertainly, in nominalism and in the scepticism of the Renaissance, did these features reappear. Raphael's "School of Athens" depicts European philosophy as it took shape in reaction against the Sophists and their relativism; a philosophy, that is, which points out in experience rational laws and ideas, and derives these laws from the divine cosmic reason. Here the modern

natural sciences, which in other respects pass clean beyond the horizon of antiquity, have changed nothing. With Kepler and Galileo, Descartes and Newton, the purport of science is the discovery of a rational necessity in the processes of nature. It is now rightly recognized that the conception of rationally necessary laws of nature is derived from Platonism. Even the Kantian philosophy follows the lead of Platonism when it attempts to construe these natural laws as a rational necessity of the mind, and thus to secure them against pure relativism, as well as against a materialism which annuls necessity and mind together. It is no wonder, therefore, that from the Kantian philosophy have issued once more the analogues of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism. And Neokantianism, even in its most cautious, positivist-agnostic form, is prepared to assert the rationality and necessity of the laws, referring them to the *a priori* organizing activity of the thinking subject.

Under these circumstances, it is but natural that the philosophy of religion, too, should conform to the Platonic type. For the philosophy of religion is in truth nothing other than the application of universal philosophic theory to the understanding of religion and judgment upon it. Religion in itself is without ideas and without scientific method. Hence it can never give rise to a completely independent science determined only by the indications of religion itself. It will always be necessary to apply general principles, defined on the plane of science at large. Accordingly, the European philosophy of religion, so far as it has been able to develop at all in the presence of popular mythology and of the official theology (and to filter somewhat into the latter), is throughout Platonic and Neoplatonic in nature. Stoicism, whose contributions were considerable, and especially important for ethics, was hardly felt to be different from Platonism; it represented only the more simple and popular philosophical element. As soon, therefore, as the Christian community, emerging from the obscurity of the lower and middle strata of society, felt the need of the intellectual life and sought to offer a philosophical basis for the common faith, Platonism came to the fore.

The two greatest constructive theologians of the ancient church,

Origen and Augustine, required such a basis, and both found it in Platonism. The spiritual contemplation of the eternal and necessary ideas is for Origen the very substance of all religion; and if it be asked where in this is to be found the specifically religious element, Origen would answer that it lies in the assimilation, communion, and unification of being, between the divine and the finite spirit, realized in this contemplation. The fellowship of Christian worship and life adds to this only the concrete visibility of the divine reason in the incarnate Logos, the moral laws of the Logos, and the mysteries founded by him. Under such a view a distinction is of course made between an esoteric, philosophical type of Christianity and an exoteric, mythical, ecclesiastical one. For Augustine, the mind's logical certainty of itself, which overcomes scepticism, is the most elementary expression of religion. He goes on to seek support in the Neoplatonic conception of an immanence of the divine thought in human thought, so that, by the clarification of thought itself, the ascent to unity with the divine spirit which is operative in this process follows. Complete assurance, indeed, he obtains only through the authority of the church, with its dogma, its sacraments, and its rule of life.

From Augustine down, this fundamental philosophy of religion has persisted. It has been broadened by Aristotelianism, moralized by Stoicism; but it has remained the fundamental philosophy of religion, so far as one has been needed. This foundation appeared most clearly in so-called Mysticism, which satisfied its yearning for immediateness and intensity in the religious process by an unparalleled emphasis on these fundamentals, and made the Christian dogma a mere symbol of the cosmic process, in which the potential unity of divine and human reason—the universal cosmic law—is made actual in the Christian soul through contact with the truth taught by the church. We meet a like thought in the mystics of the Renaissance, but with the specifically Christian elements completely eliminated; while the mystics and spiritualists of Protestantism have naturally introduced the historical aspect of Christianity more strongly and in various ways. The religious part of Spinoza's teaching is to be understood no otherwise, and is closely connected with the mysticism

of his day. In recent times, under the influence of the modern conception of evolution in history, Christianity has been understood as a transitional stage, or as the culmination, of a process wherein the soul apprehends the unity with the divine reason which inheres in the nature of spirit. An unbroken line runs here from Leibnitz, Lessing, and Herder to Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher, and thence to the religious philosophy of today. The doctrine of Kant, too, which pre-eminently maintains the fundamental thought of Platonism, does not depart from this type in its philosophy of religion. The apprehension of the immediate unity of the finite and the infinite reason does not, indeed, form the basis here, and religion is treated as the complement of ethics, to which it is annexed; but since the rationally necessary law of the practical reason connects the finite spirit with "reason in general," the Platonic type is maintained, at least indirectly, through the mediation of the moral. Kant's philosophy of religion is a sort of grafting of Stoicism upon the Platonic theory. So far, also, as the Neokantian theology (which in Herrmann is much nearer to Count Zinzendorf than it is to Kant) finds in the moral law a general philosophical support for the underpinning of Christianity, it, too, despite its contempt for the philosophy of religion, is connected, though by a rather slender thread, with Platonism and its conceptual necessities.

The leading ideas which appear in such a philosophy of religion are the following:

1. Consciousness, as a finite concretion of the universal cosmic consciousness, and taken together with the necessary presuppositions which are *a priori* and potentially contained in it, is the source of religion, Religion is a fact of consciousness; yet not mere fact, but the result of a necessity of consciousness, in the further interpretation of which the necessity of religious conceptions is made to approximate, now to the ultimate metaphysical, now to the ultimate ethical ideas, or again is characterized as something entirely unique, and with a content which is hard to define.

2. This necessity of consciousness, or *a priori* spiritual law, by virtue of which the individual relates himself to an absolute immanent in the soul, is the kernel of religious phenomena, which

are everywhere identical, in spite of all their external diversities, accidental variations, and obscurations. This is the "essence of religion," which in various manifestations becomes variously actual, but presses on toward the pure realization of itself—a genuinely Platonic thought.

3. This essence of religion actually appears as a constantly changing and mobile phenomenon, a fact which is explained partly by the notion of empirical distortion, partly by that of necessary individualization, partly by that of an historical, evolutionary movement directed toward the realization of itself. According to the sturdiness of our underlying rationalism, we either content ourselves here with empirical classifications, or else we seek to understand and rationalize this movement like everything else. In the latter case it will appear as an evolution necessarily resulting from the relation of the spirit to the world of experience, and one in which we can recognize the stages of development.

4. As the "essence of religion" never lies quite in broad daylight, while the historical movement aims at the pure realization of this essence, questions present themselves about a complete, final, and therefore rationally necessary, realization of this "essence"—whether such a realization is possible at all, whether it has already come into existence, when and how it may perhaps be brought about by the future. This is the problem of absolute religion, and is immediately encountered so soon as consciousness is recognized as expressing rational necessities and religion is accepted as one of these necessities. For Christian theologians the difficulty then arises of construing Christianity as the absolute religion.

5. All these investigations have set out from the fact of consciousness, which, however, as already said, is more than mere fact, being a compound of both the necessary and the contingent. Such a way of thinking gains its final security only when it firmly anchors the individual consciousness, of itself always contingent, in the holding-ground of "consciousness in general," and then, on that basis, makes the compound somehow comprehensible, so that in it the elements of necessity are plainly seen to derive their origin from the absolute consciousness, and the

direction of evolution is understood as a movement toward that goal. In the background here stands the problem of the connection of finite and infinite consciousness. This problem is often called insoluble, and in that case, as in Schleiermacher, the idea of God loses its metaphysical character. When a solution is attempted, as in the Hegelian school, universal rational necessity absorbs the empirical, contingent, and free elements, so that the result is a pantheistic monism; or, as in Schelling and Schopenhauer, it becomes apparent that the compound cannot be rationally analyzed, in which case an element of irrationalism enters into the idea of God that neutralizes the rational foundation thought.

When we set before us these fundamental ideas of the European, essentially Platonic, philosophy of religion, it is at once clear how exactly opposite is the position of James. James is more than the religious psychologist who has added a new field to the philosophy of religion. He is, by the very act of making the philosophy of religion into a psychology of religion, the representative of an altogether opposite type of thought in general, and therefore of an opposite type of the philosophy of religion. James likes to call himself a radical empiricist. That means, first of all, that he describes himself as a radical antiplatonist; the implied contrast to the insufficiently radical empiricists, or agnostic positivists, is for the moment a secondary matter. The main point is opposition to all apriorism and to all belief in law in every field, to the rationalist theory of knowledge, and to any prepossession in favor of necessity and synthesis. He is a pure analyzer and empiricist, who takes the facts solely as facts, not seeking in them any rational necessity and validity in which alone the proper essence of the facts is manifested, not combining and linking them together according to rational principles and finding only in this combination the true object of knowledge. He sides with the type against which Plato contended, with the relativism of the Sophists, which naturally, with him also, turns into psychologism. He resembles the nominalistic and sceptical opposition which Platonism has always met. He has his proper, immediate root, however, in the British philosophy of strict empiricism, as Locke laid its foundations in opposition to

Descartes—who was the founder of the modern Platonism of natural science—as Hume developed it on a great scale, and as John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte brought it to wider dominion.

James does not, indeed, remain a relativist and sceptic in the sense of the Sophists. Rather, he, too, is seeking the way to normative and valid knowledge, although not by the aid of the rationalism of laws and necessities, but by means of biological evolutionism and an idealized utilitarianism. Hypotheses used in the process of knowing and verified by results, the economy achieved by logical generalizations saving the labor of thinking in particulars, principles which are helpful in the struggle for existence, and ennobling,—these give him everything that the Platonist and Kantian gets from *a priori* necessities. They give it, indeed, provisionally, and with the possibility of constant improvement, but they give it. Therein he approximates to such modern European antiplatonic thinkers as Mach and Avenarius —points of contact which have been instructively emphasized by Goldstein, in his book, *Die Wandelungen der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1911). The aim of attaining to knowledge and to confidence in knowledge is not renounced by him, and he does not trifle as do the Sophists. But his knowledge is guaranteed solely by a practical faith, and determined only by the degree of its verification in practice. For him the individual is everything; and the individual is an element in a continuous stream which makes everything relative, and from which it can only artificially be isolated. We can merely analyze this stream, empirically classify its chief phenomena, and verify the scientific, social, ethical, religious, and metaphysical hypotheses emerging from it by assessing the amount of their practical efficiency in the furthering of life. There is no absolute unity and no absolute necessity whatsoever. Logic is only a labor-saving device, a kind of short-hand, indispensable, indeed, to knowledge, and resulting from the constitution of the mind, but indefinitely improvable. The ethical and other necessities, the values and ideals, are the more or less provisional condensation of experiences concerning what enhances, steadies, and harmonizes life. James himself calls this point of view "Pragmatism," and has found a great number of

disciples, who hold it with intelligence and zeal. On the foundation of purely psychological analysis, which has no contemplative interest in knowing truth for truth's sake, but recognizes only a continual succession of stimuli and discharges in act, is built up a relativistic-utilitarian conception of the universe, which acknowledges that the brain intervenes in that stream with a free determination of relative values, and which includes among its values the spiritual, ethical, and religious, as expansions and enhancements of human nature. These are entirely subjective appraisals on one's own account and at one's own risk. But in their actual diffusion and in their function of expanding human nature they gain a certain measure of objective confirmation. From the purely metaphysical point of view, they remain a venture, which must be hazarded, and by which we perhaps help on the work of the cosmic Spirit.

A philosophy of religion conceived from this point of view can by its very nature be nothing else than a psychology of religion. It does not ignore the question as to the value, meaning, and future development of religion, but it proposes to answer this question with wholly antirationalistic means. Now this is the point where the "radical empiricism" of James turns not only against the more or less veiled rationalism of Plato, but also against the insufficiently radical empiricism of his own predecessors and contemporaries,—against the agnostic positivism which treats religion solely as a part of ethnology and the psychology of primitive men, that is to say, against Comte, and especially against Spencer's Darwinian evaporation of all present value in religion. While by their doctrine real experience is limited to the phenomena of the material world and of social relations, and all further belief in a transcendental world is declared illusory, James sees in such a conclusion the influence of that scientific Platonism which admits only the laws of combination of atoms, material and psychic, and which throws on the scrap-heap of romantic dreams everything that finds no room in these "necessary" combinations. If we free ourselves completely from this naturalism, with its doctrine of rational necessity inherited from a Platonism turned to natural science, then there is no reason why we should not see in religious and cognate phenomena real experiences—experi-

ences as real as those which we have of a stone or from a beam of light. The experiences of the material world lose their tyrannical exclusiveness as soon as their coherence no longer signifies a closed causality of rational necessity; and there is no reason for not treating as genuine experiences the religious phenomena that still survive in full vitality. The naturalistic, antireligious prepossession of the positivists is the last evil remnant of a Platonism become natural science. If that collapses, as from this point of view it must collapse, nothing stands in the way of a completely unprejudiced analysis of religious phenomena. This analysis will have to be a psychological one, although here again not in the sense of a constructive psychology which from the smallest elements builds up complicated structures in accordance with ideas of causal necessity, but in the sense of an analytic psychology, such as James's radical empiricism has created. As constituent parts of a continuous stream of consciousness, ever acting and reacting, the phenomena are to be isolated, analyzed, classified, and their significance for life appraised. Their eventual metaphysical meaning then forms an ultimate and independent question by itself, which, again, is to be answered only through experience, and not through the phantom of rational necessity.

So arises a type of the philosophy of religion which, both in general and in particular, is at all points opposed to the Platonic. It will now be instructive, after this general characterization, to contrast it in detail with the main positions of the platonizing philosophy of religion, as they have already been stated. This will further make plain how each of the two types forms a self-consistent whole, and how in its own way each is a logically perfect theory. One can even say that these are the two logically possible leading types, each having a peculiar serviceableness to thought, and each corresponding to a distinct side of the phenomenon in question.

The contrast to the five points presents itself in the following fashion:

1. James, too, starts from the facts of consciousness. But for him, from the point of view of the psychology of religion as well as of general psychology, consciousness is a stream of psychophysical occurrences, not to be limited and not to be resolved,

a bundle of continuous experiences in constant motion, which, starting from some physical stimulus, pass on through mental activity, and are discharged in some action. Thus disappears all *a priori* unity of consciousness, all connection between contingent individual consciousness and consciousness in general, all derivation of validity from the central unity of consciousness, all contrast between pure necessities of mind and the concomitant or underlying organic processes. In brief, everything is lacking which, as he ironically says, is peculiar to the "Platonic psychologists of the Continent."

2. Accordingly, the characterization of those facts of consciousness, or experiences, which, using the common term, he calls religious, is something quite different from the search for the "essence" and typical valid contents of religion. James takes the religious experiences in a purely empirical way, and gives a purely empirical, approximate characterization, which accumulates its marks indefinitely, and leaves the question wholly open whether religious experiences are really unitary and specific experiences. For the estimate of the value of religion this indefiniteness of characterization is entirely unimportant, since this value obviously does not depend on any unitary and necessary function which religion may be supposed to have in the system of values of consciousness, but rather on its practical and biological service in the enlarging and strengthening of human life. Such a service can be rendered, of course, just as well by a highly complex group of experiences as by a simple one. Similarly, the connection which must be assumed between religious experiences and the processes of the nerves and brain, particularly the familiar relation between strongly religious temperament and nervous abnormalities, presents no difficulty. The worth of religion and the recognition of it depend upon its actual working, not upon the demonstration that it is derived from any "source," whether psychological or hoölogical or ontological. The result is that no *idea* of religion is in fact possible. All we can have is a highly indefinite, relative description, which piles up various characteristics, and, besides, confines itself to one selected part of what is in fact an illimitable phenomenon, namely, to the sphere of individual, personal, religious feeling, which represents

what is most primitive in religion. As a criterion for getting at these characteristics, in the absence of any self-contained and necessary "essence" of religion, James uses the empirically ascertainable eccentricities, the saints, ascetics, and mystics, in whom the phenomena appear in one-sided, and often morbid, phases. The reduction and adjustment which any respectable religion will require for purposes of practical use is accomplished by life itself.

3. So, while the European philosophy of religion, from its premise of a unitary essence, seeks to comprehend the historical stages of evolution as teleological, James knows the varieties only as psychological variations, in every case dependent on general psychical condition and on nervous constitution. The great historical complexes, taken by and large, are merely accidental differences in name and external historical location. In truth, he holds, analogies and psychically conditioned varieties run through all religious systems, and are to be understood by psychological and psychophysical interpretation, not by any dialectic of self-evolving thought. Hence James treats only of those religious systems from which definite subjective testimonies and confessions of religious persons are to be had. The religion of savages and of primitive men, which for ordinary positivism is all-important, he passes by as obscure and practically unimportant, as he does the several philosophical theories of an historical evolution of the religious consciousness. So he arranges the varieties solely according to the great psychological leading types of the general constitution of the soul, and divides religious experiences into such as correspond to the type of the "healthy mind," the "sick soul," and the "divided self." In accordance with the psychological nature of his thinking and the strongly neurological character of his psychology, James emphasizes the fact that these differences exist in all systems, and do not depend on thought and its movement, but on the nervous constitution. His principle, consequently, for the classification of varieties is derived neither from a necessary movement of ideas nor from the great historic complexes, but solely from the types of nervous systems by which the religious emotional attitude is colored and determined. In the great historic systems we can speak at most

of a preponderance of this or that type, according as the founder and leading personalities have made one or another type authoritative for the auto-suggestion of their followers. Nevertheless, all this does not signify a strict neurological fatalism, since James holds that it is in some measure possible for the free will to enter into the impressions which casually present themselves. His psychology is neurological, so far as this principle can be carried through, but not mechanistic and naturalistic.

4. As James's empirical conception of the nature of religion does not deny to religion practical or biological value, so in the presence of this manifoldness of experience he recognizes the necessity of a standard of discrimination and graduation. Of course, this cannot mean a measuring of the phenomena by the standard of an absolute and rationally necessary ideal of religion, nor even an approximation to such an ideal as something to be at least postulated and contemplated as ultimately achievable. As the absolute and the rationally necessary exist nowhere, they do not exist here. Rather does the standard emerge in the vital movements and adjustments which contribute to the self-preservation and self-expansion of the race. Here the one-sidednesses of exaggerated religion are happily removed through adaptation to the totality of the interests of life, and the medial type of a moderate religiousness results. Here also those experiences gain importance as the more valuable and the more conducive to welfare which embrace the whole complex life of the soul and overcome this complexity by the power of a unitary principle. These expand, enrich, and invigorate life as can no other function of the soul. Thus the relative maximum value belongs to the individualistic redemptive type of piety found in Protestantism, or the faith which emphasizes conversion with a strong ethical verification—which, of course, is not to deny that like precious experiences are found outside of Protestantism or of Christianity. The attainment of this maximum experience is dependent, however, upon the constitution of the individual, and it will never become a universal possession of mankind, nor will it be esteemed the highest except from a point of view which sets so high a value on the unification of the divided self. Every such judgment of value is purely subjective, a hazard, a venture.

5. In all this the only question is as to the biologically ascertainable value for life of religious experiences or of the contents of consciousness. The idea of value for life takes the place of truth or validity. But, obviously, that is not the whole story. Even James has eventually to raise the ontological question. He has all the more to raise it, because really the only specific feature of the religious state that he singles out is the coloring of universal mental processes by the subject's relation to a particular object, namely, the supposed divine Power. To be sure, it might be abstractly possible to give a neurological explanation for this conception of the object, and such an explanation would do no prejudice to his estimate of the value of religion. But such explanations, like those offered by the school of Freud, based upon sexual psychology, seem to him inadequate. Thus the question remains to be answered, as to the rise of this idea of the object and its possible relation to reality; and James, himself a man evidently of strong personal religious feeling, takes it up with special interest. But whereas Platonism is compelled to answer such ontological questions by referring the idea back to the self-revelation of the absolute, active and present in the idea itself, James can meet them only in a wholly empirical way, much as people generally refer the idea of an object to the reality behind the idea, assuming that the idea was somehow produced as an impression from the object, or as the popular faith believes in divine influences on the soul in individual cases.

At this point James comes to the most original and personal chapter of his philosophy of religion. Together with all his empiricist and positivist colleagues, he is unable to find in ordinary consciousness any place where such incursion of a religious power would be possible. Therefore, he turns to the modern discovery of the subconsciousness, as possibly offering the entrance at which the divine power generates the idea of the religious object. Of course, he can present such an explanation only as a wholly personal and merely probable "over-belief." Moreover, his use of the subconsciousness, which elsewhere in modern psychology is more like a sphere split off from the normal consciousness, serving to explain apparently sudden and, in particular, pathological incursions into the superconsciousness, is altogether origi-

nal. He here approaches Myers, and the "Society for Psychical Research," which studies mystical phenomena. But in this "over-belief" it is not merely methodically instructive to observe how the antiplatonic fundamental thought makes any other solution impossible, but James has equipped the solution with another much more important antiplatonic contrast. He insists that the Platonic solution must lead to the thought of an absolute being, a law of laws, a unified cosmic authority, and thereby necessarily beget pantheism or monism or the "block-universe," in which he holds there can be merely a religious light thrown upon the cosmic universe of law, but no vital intercourse with God; only mystic feelings of unity, no divine rescue and redemption; only general ideas, no vigor of life and no voluntary resolve of faith. His antimonism, which is a corollary of antirationalism and antiplatonism, does, he says, more justice to real religious experience, and at the same time emancipates religious life from doctrines that stifle it. Indeed, as the much-discussed "Postscript" shows, it also evacuates the thought of God of all inner unity and definiteness, and does not shrink from the further consequence of polytheism, which is, as he says, the strictly empiricist idea of God.

When we consider all this, the contradiction here presented to the European philosophy of religion seems complete, as James explicitly declared it to be. If that be so, the question as to the significance of James's philosophy of religion would become the simple alternative of a choice between it and the European type, a choice in which the only question to be raised would be the general one of their respective methods.

But before, in conclusion, I take up this question, one observation must be made which will again diminish the practical difference between the two types. On each theory the result for the conception of religion is very much the same. In both cases the result is a complete reaction from dogmatic theology, church, ecclesiastical worship, ritual, sacrament, and canonical law to the element of purely personal religious attitude. The marrow of religious phenomena is understood, on both sides, in a mystical and spiritual sense; only with the Platonists the contemplative mysticism of the vision of the Absolute and Eternal

preponderates, with the empiricists the practical mysticism of experience of the mystical state, saintliness, and love of humanity. In both cases the theory emphasizes the immediateness of the religious life, in contrast to historical authorities and traditions and to sociological constructions. The historical sinks to an inciting occasion, and redemption lies in the elevation of the subject into immediate unity with the divine power. In neither case does the philosophy of religion substitute a "pure religion" for the dominant religions; it simply furnishes a solid foundation and justification for the religious life in general, leaving free its living course, which it essays to regulate only for those to whom reflective thought is a necessity. This naturally brings about a difference between the esoteric religion of the thinker and the exoteric religion of the masses. On either hand, the freedom which is secured to the heart of religion to create its own form involves a complete mutual tolerance between the religious groups and between believers within each group. This means that in the end both views see on the whole the highest, or most valuable, evolutionary form in an individualized and spiritualized Protestantism, such as has resulted from a great part of Protestant history, and itself, indeed, stands under the influence of such theories.

There abides, however, the contrast between the inner majesty of the absolutely necessary and valid, on the one hand, and practical vitality and concreteness, unimpaired by scientific abstractions or by ideas of unity or law, on the other. The one view inclines to monism and pantheism, the other to untiring activity and to living interaction between God and the soul. The one finds its demonstration in its intuitive apprehension of the necessary and the universally valid, the other in the spiritual power and effect of the mystical state. It is, in mediaeval language, the difference between realism and nominalism. It is a difference like that between Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventura. It suggests, too, the difference between Luther and Calvin. To go farther afield, one can think of the difference between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In modern German literature treating of the philosophy of religion, the difference might be illustrated by the contrast between Simmel, who has much in common with

James's psychological relativism but rejects his robust utilitarian standard of judgment and his theology of the subconsciousness, and Rudolf Eucken, who, in sharpest opposition to the psychological method, endeavors to establish a noölogical one, and understands by this the derivation of the entire world of ideas from an historically unfolding basis of universal realities. In Simmel we have a combination of nominalistic-psychological mysticism and sophistic relativism, in Eucken a combination of Plato, Fichte, and Hegel. The contrast is therefore plainly founded on the two great, diverging tendencies in human life and thought universally; and by reason of the very agreement of both tendencies in their apprehension of what is the central religious process, that process is subjected to contrary interpretations.

This contrast of interpretations and of the theories to which they give rise—one that of a psychological positivism, the other that of an absolutist theory of knowledge—is certainly great enough to bring again before us the old alternative.

A full discussion of this question is impossible in the present article. Such a discussion would touch upon the most general philosophical principles, and has been often undertaken, and by many hands. For myself I can only accept the *a priori*, transcendental philosophy. It seems to me closely bound up with the recognition of all logical validity. Moreover, a doctrine of values in the field of ethics and aesthetics is not to be constructed without the idea of an element unqualifiedly valid, issuing from the nature of consciousness. Finally, and above all, justice to the religious sentiment is done only by a theory which does not put usefulness in the place of truth, nor substitute a quasi-physical action in the subconsciousness for the presence of God in the human spirit. In religion a relation to a whole, to an absolute, to something possessing inner necessity, is always indispensable. James himself felt this when, among other characteristics of religion, he spoke of a "reaction upon the cosmos, upon the universe," of a relation of the individual to "the first and the last word of truth," to "primal truth," to "the most primal and enveloping and deeply true," when he recognized in religion a "root of happiness in the absolute and everlasting." Such words, taken seriously, shatter James's whole theory and recall

Plato and Schleiermacher. For my part, I hold substantially to Platonism, and to that extent would still stand by the criticism which I passed on James in an address before the Congress at St. Louis on "Psychology and the Theory of Knowledge in the Science of Religion."

On the other hand, the impression of James's presentation, living, unprejudiced, saturated with reality, grows on me. I perceive that the criticism of the idea of the absolute which, though without transgressing the limits of transcendentalism, I made in my essay on the "Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religion" (2d edition, 1911), comes unintentionally rather near to that of James, so far as it deals with a standard of judgment for the history of religion. So I find it much more difficult today than in the past to incorporate the element of relative correctness in James's philosophy of religion into the structure of the transcendental, *a priori* philosophy of Kant and Schleiermacher. We are dealing not merely with the psychology of religion, but with a philosophy of religion begotten of psychologism—a method of thought in which the two things are inseparably connected, and which stands sharply opposed at every point to transcendentalism.

Nevertheless, if the fundamental principle of the Platonic system of thought is accepted, nothing remains but to sever religious psychology from the pragmatist presuppositions as to the theory of knowledge and metaphysics, and to adopt into Platonism the element of truth which pragmatism holds.

There is, it seems to me, one way in which this can be done, although I can but briefly indicate it here. The transcendental method starts from a purely psychological analysis, and from that works on to find the point where the *a priori* element of consciousness asserts itself. Such an analysis must be made without any presupposition from metaphysics or the theory of knowledge. It must proceed in purely positive and empirical fashion, and therefore can very well operate, provisionally, with the fundamental assumptions of empiricism and pragmatism. But all that is a purely provisional description and analysis of the phenomena. Now James, by retaining, as he does, in such an analysis the conception of the religious object as a residual

datum, indicates the point at which the transcendental analysis can start in and penetrate deeper. At every stage of such a procedure, James's chief virtues—his marvellous freshness, freedom from prejudice, and sharpness of observation—will be a model.

But there is one thing more which we can and must learn from James. With full justice he calls attention to the consequences of the absolute transcendental belief in law, which in its ultimate outcome transforms reality into a monistic formula expressing a universal law, and reduces religion to an abstract sense of unity, or confines its function to that of supplementing a closed mechanical universe by sundry ineffective postulates or judgments of value. In opposition to this, James rightly points out that every unsophisticated and unperverted religious sentiment presupposes a "piecemeal supernaturalism," that is, a power distinct from universal law and operating within it as a living force. Of course, this observation does not hold good for Christianity alone; and in making it he is undoubtedly right. But even here the relief cannot come through pragmatism, which with its "pluralistic universe," its "multiverse," and its polytheism, does violence to the equally naïve basic sentiment of religion. The only question can be how, within the universal connex which issues from the Deity, to give due weight to multiplicity, irrationality, mere actuality, vital creative power. In my article on "Contingency," in Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I have referred to this task, which, in spite of its difficulty and of the repudiation of it by the prejudices of the prevailing rationalism of law, has always formed, and still forms, the chief problem of speculation. If laws and the *a priori* can be elicited from the chaos of reality only by abstraction and analysis, then, when the return is made from them to reality, all the irrational and purely fact-contents of reality must remain or must be restored to their rights. So we shall always have the "mixed universe" of which James speaks. Indeed, only so can we arrive at such mixture; by James's way it is only possible to attain to a multiplicity of irrational facts, and never to such a mixture of the rational and irrational. This mixture constituted the problem of Plato and of Neoplatonism; it is the problem of Kant, and was again em-

phasized by the aged Schelling in the final stage of his evolutionistic pantheism. Only where, under the influence of classical natural science, the *a priori* philosophy has been transformed into the mechanical monism of a "Naturphilosophie" does the problem of mixture disappear—and with it religion as well. To this James has rightly called attention. But his own solution is so radical a cutting of the knot that in consistency he ought not to recognize any mixture, but only a pure irrationality and multiplicity, which likewise nullifies religion, and is more consistently represented by agnostic positivism than by James's doctrine. In so far as from his point of view he does justice to religious experience, he also is constrained to interfuse Platonic elements in his general view.

For all that, James has set before the philosophy of religion, as well as philosophy in general, the task of giving serious heed to realities, and has filled them with justifiable mistrust of abstract theories. But, nevertheless, the abstract is the sphere of philosophy; and our task is to make abstractions fit life, not to abolish them altogether and put the chaos of reality into their place. If the philosophy of religion is to exist at all—and it is impossible to see how, in view of our distrust of all merely ecclesiastical faith and of all merely enthusiastic affirmations, we are to get on without it—then the abstractions of the transcendental method will have to stay with us. We must simply try to put into them more of the living reality.

CHRISTLESS CHRISTIANITY

BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The Christ Myth by Arthur Drews was published early in 1909,[1] and before the year was out its author was being requisitioned by dissidents from Christianity of the most incongruous types as a promising instrument for the general anti-christian propaganda. Few more remarkable spectacles have ever been witnessed than the exploitation throughout Germany in the opening months of 1910 of this hyper-idealistic metaphysician, disciple of von Hartmann and convinced adherent of the "Philosophy of the Unconscious," by an Alliance the declared basis of whose organization is a determinate materialism. As, under the auspices of the *Monistenbund*, he made his progress from city to city, lecturing and debating, he drew a tidal-wave of sensation along with him. A violent literary war was inaugurated. It seemed as if all theological Germany were aroused.

In one quarter there was an ominous silence. The "Conservative" theologians looked on at the whole performance with bitter contempt. When twitted [2] with leaving to the "Liberals" the whole task of defending the historicity of Jesus against Drews, they replied with much justice that it was none of their fight. The Liberals had for two generations been proclaiming the only Jesus that ever existed a myth: why should it cause surprise if some at length were taking the proclamation seriously and drawing the inference—if such a simple recasting of the identical proposition can be called an inference—that therefore no Jesus ever existed? If the Christianity which flowed out from Palestine and overspread the world was not the creation of Jesus, but the spontaneous precipitation of old-world myths from a solution just

[1] Arthur Drews, Die Christusmythe, Jena, 1909, and many subsequent editions. English translation: The Christ Myth, by Arthur Drews, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy in the Techn. Hochschule, Karlsruhe. Translated from the third edition (revised and enlarged) by C. Delisle Burns, M.A. London, [1910].

[2] As by the Christliche Freiheit, February 13, 1910.

now, as it happened, evaporated past the saturation point, why postulate behind it a shadowy figure, standing in no causal relation to it, without any effective historical connection with it, for whose existence there is therefore neither historical nor logical need? We may not think the language elegant, but we can scarcely pronounce the jibe unprovoked, when Herr Superintendent Doctor Matthes of Kolberg bursts forth in Hengstenberg's old *Evangelical Church-Journal:*[3] "That the wasted, colorless phantom which alone the Liberal theology leaves over of Jesus could not have transformed a world,—that is clear to all the world except the Liberal theologians themselves, who are still always hoping to see their homunculus come forth from the Gilgameshmishmash-mush-brine which alone is left in the pantry of the comparative-religionists and which Arthur Drews has served out afresh to the Berliners." That the Liberal theology has travailed and brought forth a monstrous birth is not surprising; nor is it surprising that the fruit of its womb should turn and rend it. Let them fight it out; that is their concern; and if the issue is, as seems likely, the end of both, the world will be well rid of them. Why should sane people take part in such a "theological mill" in which "as-yet Christians" and "no-longer Christians" struggle together in the arena with nothing at stake,—for certainly the difference between the reduced Jesus of the one and the no Jesus of the other is not worth contending about? To deny the existence of Jesus is, of course, as Ernst Troeltsch puts it, "silly";[4] to be asked to defend the actual existence of Jesus is, as Adolf Harnack phrases it, "humiliating."[5] But the artillery which the Liberal theologians have hurriedly trained upon the denial shows how little they can really let it go at that. It is only the Conservative, secure in the possession of the real Jesus, who can look serenely upon this shameful folly and with undisturbed detachment watch the wretched comedy play itself out.

Only the Conservative,—and, we may add, the extreme Radical. For there is a Radicalism, still calling itself Christian, so

[3] Die evangelische Kirchenzeitung, March 6, 1910.

[4] "Die törichte Frage" (Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben, 1911, p. 2).

[5] "Beschämend" (Neue Freie Presse, May 15, 1910, reprinted in Aus Wissenschaft und Leben, 1911, vol. ii, p. 167).

thoroughgoing as to fall as much below concernment with the question whether Jesus ever lived as Conservatism rises above it. The Conservative looks with unconcern upon all the pother stirred up by the debate on the historicity of Jesus, because he clearly perceives that it is all (if we may combine Harnack's and Troeltsch's phraseology) scandalous nonsense, unworthy of the notice of anyone with an atom of historical understanding. The Radical looks upon it with unconcern because in his self-centred life Jesus has no essential place and no necessary part to play: the question whether Jesus ever lived is to him a merely academic one. An interesting episode in Drews's lecture-tour through the Germanic cities brings this point of view before us with strong emphasis. A discussion was contemplated at Bremen also, and the *Monistenbund* there extended an invitation to the local *Protestantenverein* to take part in it. This invitation was decisively declined, and the *Protestantenverein* took a good deal of pains to make it perfectly plain why it was declined. The *Protestantenverein* was not quite clear in its own mind that the whole business was not merely an advertising scheme for the benefit of the *Monistenbund;* though, to be sure, it could not see what Monists as Monists have to do with the question whether Jesus ever lived, more than "whether Socrates ever lived, or Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays." The *Protestantenverein*, moreover, for itself felt entirely assured on good historical grounds of the historicity of Jesus, and had no interest in threshing out old straw. But it was on neither of these grounds that it declined to take part in the debate, but precisely because it was a matter of no importance to it whether Jesus ever lived or not. "All the theologians of the Bremen *Protestantenverein*," they formally explain, "are agreed that the question whether Jesus lived is, as such, not a religious but a historico-scientific question. It would be sad for Christianity as a religion if its right of existence hung on the question whether anybody whatever ever lived, or anything whatever ever occurred, even though it be the greatest personalities and the most important events which are in question. Every true religion lives not because of 'accidental truths of history,' but because of 'eternal truths of reason.' It lives not because of its past, more or less verifiable and always subject to the critical

scrutiny of historical science; but because of the vital forces which it every day disengages afresh into the soul from the depths of the unconditioned." All the great religious forces of Christianity—trust in the Living God, elevated moral self-respect, sincere love of men—are quite independent today of all question of the historicity of Jesus, and therefore this question can without fear be left in the hands in which it belongs,—in the hands of untrammelled historical criticism. "Whether Jesus existed or not, is for our religious and Christian life, in the last analysis, a matter of indifference, if only this life be really religious and Christian, and preserve its vital power in our souls and in our conduct." [6]

There is asserted here something more than that religion is independent of Jesus. That was being vigorously asserted by the adherents of the *Monistenbund;* and as for Drews, his *Christ Myth*—like the *Christianity of the New Testament* of his master, von Hartmann, before it—was written, he tells us, precisely in the interests of religion, and seeks to sweep Jesus out of the way that men may be truly religious. With the extremities of this view the members of the Bremen *Protestantenverein* express no sympathy: they are of the number of those who profess and call themselves Christians. What they assert, therefore, is not that religion merely, but distinctively that Christianity is independent of Jesus. They do not declare, indeed, that Christianity, as it has actually existed in the world, has had, in point of fact, nothing to do with Jesus; or that Christians of today—they themselves as Christians—have had or have no relations with Jesus. They are convinced on sound historical grounds of the historicity of Jesus; they recognize that he has played a part in setting the movement called Christianity going; they draw, no doubt, inspiration from his memory. What they cannot allow is that he is essential to Christianity. They are conscious of standing in some such relation to him as that in which an idealistic philosopher stands, say, to a Plato. In point of fact such a philosopher reverences Plato, and derives from him inspiration and impulse, perhaps even instruction. But had there been no Plato, he would be able to do very well without a Plato. So Christians may in

[6] See the whole document in the Christliche Welt, April 28, 1910, pp. 402 ff.

point of fact owe not a little to Jesus, and they may be very willing to acknowledge their indebtedness. But Christianity cannot be dependent on Jesus. Though there had been no Jesus, Christianity would be; and were his figure eradicated from history—or even from the mind of man—tomorrow, Christianity would suffer no loss. The sources of its life, the springs of its vitality, lie in itself: it may owe much to a great personality, teaching it, embodying it; it cannot owe to him its being.

The *Protestantenverein* of the good city of Bremen is, of course, not the inventor of this christless Christianity. It is as old as Christianity itself; and has come to explicit assertion whenever and wherever men have thought of Christianity rather as universal human religion in more or less purity of expression—perhaps in the purest expression yet given to it, or even in its purest possible expression—than as a specific positive religion instituted among men in particular historical circumstances.[7] The classical period of this point of view is, of course, the Enlightenment; and its classical expounder in that period, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing; and the classical treatise in which Lessing propounds it, the tract written in response to Johann Daniel Schumann under the title, *Concerning the Proof of Spirit and Power* (1777); in which occurs accordingly its classical crystallization in a crisp proposition, the famous declaration (very naturally quoted by the theologians of the Bremen *Protestantenverein*) that "accidental truths of history can never be the proof of necessary truths of reason."

In Lessing's conception, as in that of some before him and of many after him,[8] Christianity is in its essence simply what we have learned to know as altruism. He sums it up in what he calls "the Testament of John,"—"Little children, love one

[7] Hermann Reuter, Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter, 1875, 1877, gives mediaeval instances.

[8] Perhaps the most thoroughgoing expression of it is given by Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, Eng. trans.[2], 1881, p. 209: "He therefore who loves man for the sake of man, who rises to the love of the species, to universal love, adequate to the nature of the species, he is a Christian, is Christ himself." Auguste Sabatier, however, in his ultimate statement, scarcely falls short of this. Christianity, he tells us, is the religion "of universal redemption by love," that is everybody's love for everybody. (The Doctrine of the Atonement in its Historical Evolution, Eng. trans., 1904, p. 134.)

another"; and he refuses to believe that "dogmas," whatever may be said of their probability, or even of their truth, can enter into its essence. The proximate purpose of the tract, *Concerning the Proof of Spirit and Power*,[9] is to show that the "dogmas" of the "Christian religion" cannot be put forward as essential truths, and so far as they are not intrinsically self-evidencing rest on evidence which is at best but probable. But the argument itself takes rather the form of an assault on the trustworthiness of historical testimony in general. Lessing does not deny, in this tract, that truths might conceivably be commended by authority. If a man actually witnessed miracles or fulfilments of prophecy, he might no doubt be brought to subject his understanding to that of him in whom the prophecies were visibly fulfilled and by whom the miracles were wrought. But this is not our case. We have no miracles or fulfilments to rest on; we have only accounts of miracles and fulfilments. And "accounts of the fulfilment of prophecies are not fulfilments of prophecies; accounts of miracles are not miracles." "Prophecies fulfilled before my eyes, miracles worked before my eyes," he explains, "work immediately. Accounts of fulfilments of prophecies and of miracles have to work through a medium which deprives them of all force." "How," he exclaims, "can it be asked of me to believe with the same energy, on infinitely less inducement, the very same incomprehensible truths which people from sixteen to eighteen hundred years ago believed on the strongest possible inducement?" "Or," he demands, with a show of outrage, "is everything that I read in trustworthy history, without exception, just as certain for me as what I myself experience?"

The argumentative force of the representation resides, of course, largely in its exaggerations,—"deprived of *all* force," "without exception." But Lessing skilfully proceeds to cover these exaggerations up by assuming at once an air of the sweetest reasonableness. "I do not know," he remarks, "that anyone ever maintained just that; what is maintained is only that the accounts which we have of these prophecies and miracles are just as trustworthy as any historical truths can be. And then it is

[9] Ueber den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft, in Lachmann's edition of Lessing's sämtliche Schriften, vol. xiii, pp. 1–8.

added that no doubt historical truths cannot be demonstrated,—yet, nevertheless, we must believe them just as firmly as demonstrated truths." Surely, however, exclaims Lessing, "if no historical truth can be demonstrated, then nothing can be demonstrated *by means* of historical truths, that is, accidental truths of history can never be the proof of necessary truths of reason." "I do not deny at all," he protests, "that prophecies were fulfilled in Christ; I do not deny at all that Christ wrought miracles: but I do deny that these miracles, since their truth has altogether ceased to be evinced by miracles which are still accessible today, since there exist nothing but accounts of miracles (no matter how undenied, how undeniable, they may be supposed to be), can or ought to bind me to the least faith in any other teachings of Christ."

The whole procedure involves at any rate a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος. To know that Christ raised a man from the dead,—how does that prove that God has a Son? Suppose I could prove that Christ rose from the dead? How does that prove that he is God's Son? "In what connection does my inability to advance anything decisive against the testimony to that fact stand with my duty to believe something which outrages my reason?" You tell me that the very Christ who rose from the dead declared that he was the Son of God, of the same nature with God. Of that declaration, too, we have nothing but historical evidence. If you say, No, we have inspired evidence, for the Bible is inspired,—of that, too, we have nothing but historical evidence! "This, this, is the nasty wide ditch, across which I cannot get, no matter how often and earnestly I have tried to leap it. If anybody can help me over it, let him do it, I beg him, I implore him. He will do me a great charity." Thus Lessing ends his sinuous argument with a round denial that "historical evidence" can ever place a fact beyond question. It is a case of general historical skepticism. The only evidence which can really establish a truth is the truth's own self-evidence. He breaks off suddenly, therefore, with a recommendation to his readers, divided by disputes over the Gospel of John, to come together on the Testament of John. "It is, no doubt, apocryphal, this Testament: but it is not the less divine for that." Truth is truth

wherever we find it. And truth is truth to us for no other reason than that it finds us.[10]

It was not to be expected that a point of view so natural to the Age of Reason should continue in the same measure to hold the minds of men in the Age of History. But neither was it to be expected that a point of view so deeply rooted in the popular philosophy of the eighteenth century should fail to project itself into the nineteenth, and color the thought of all who in any large degree draw their mental inheritance from the Enlightenment. We are not surprised to find Kant standing in his judgment of history wholly on the ground of Rationalism, or the lately resurrected Fries following closely in Kant's steps. Nor are we really surprised to observe Fichte still determined by the old point of view, and not even Hegel yet emancipated from it.[11] What does surprise us is that at the end of the days a Rudolf Eucken, true child of the Age of History, and, if one could be permitted to judge only from his profound sense of sin and of the need of divine grace for its overcoming, almost persuaded to be a Christian, can still speak through much the same mask. There is

[10] Otto Kirn, Glaube und Geschichte, 1900, pp. 9–10, remarks on Lessing's double point of view and the consequent confusion in his argument: "The position of the critic appears upon more exact consideration as little sure. He attacks his adversary at once from two standpoints which are not in harmony. He asserts with the Wolffian Dogmatism that reason can never receive its convictions through history. To this standpoint, however, self-experienced and past facts are alike unimportant and inconclusive, when the question concerns religious or ethical propositions. Then he comes forward in the armor of the historical critic, who is ready to let himself be convinced by facts if only they be certainly established, and authenticated by self-experienced analogies: the training of his critical judgment forbade him, however, to draw far-reaching conclusions from facts which 'act through a medium,' and remain controversial. As a Wolffian he could not openly concede what as historian of certainly authenticated facts he declared himself ready to grant. Lessing's vacillation between dogmatic rationalism and critical empiricism manifests itself in this double attitude towards history: with the one he belongs to the Enlightenment, with the other he is preparing the way for a time which would be able to see in history something better than a source of 'obscure and confused ideas' (cf. Windelband, A History of Philosophy, § 33, 9)."

[11] A lucid sketch of the history of opinion on the relations of faith and history is given in pp. 1–27 of Otto Kirn's Glaube und Geschichte, 1900. See also Karl Dunkmann, Das religiöse Apriori und die Geschichte, 1910, pp. 11–51, and the admirable general account by C. W. Hodge, in the article, "Fact and Theory" in Hastings's Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, vol. i, 1908, pp. 562–567, esp. 564–565.

a passage in the first edition of his book on *The Truth-contents of Religion*,[12] which, though historical in form, fairly expresses his own attitude towards the relation of religious truth to historical fact. Historical criticism, he thinks, has very seriously shattered the historical foundations of Christianity; indeed, the very subjection of these foundations to criticism, he argues, disqualifies them for serving as foundations of faith, however this criticism issues. Then he proceeds:

> But the shaking of the historical foundations of the religious life goes still further: it is not merely that we are compelled to doubt particular items of their contents, it is that history itself no longer seems proper to serve as the foundation of religion. For the thought to which the modern world commits the guidance of life is not disposed to recognize history as a source of eternal truths. Such a truth must be capable of immediate realization; it must be verifiable by every one and at all times; that is possible, however, only where it is grounded in the timeless nature of reason, and is continually verifiable anew thence. An occurrence of the past, on the other hand, no matter how deeply it has been imbedded in the historical connection, and no matter how energetic it may still be in its effects, does not on that account at all become a portion of our life: we cannot experience it immediately, we cannot ourselves even test its validity, we cannot transform it into a personal possession. That, however, according to our conviction, is precisely what is required for fundamental truths of religion. Thus reason and history stand over against one another in sharp opposition, and the grounding, as of all spirituality, so also of religion, on history calls out the strongest opposition. "Accidental truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason" (Lessing). If life, however, casts off this connection with history, it becomes nonsense and an unendurable burden to bind the health of man's soul to the voluntary acceptance of historical occurrences, or even of occurrences supported by history. "That historical belief is a duty and belongs to salvation is superstition" (Kant). Can such a dissolution of the old blending of reason and history affect and shake any other religion more deeply than Christianity, which is the most historical of all religions?

Some modifications have been introduced into this passage in the second edition of *The Truth-contents of Religion*,[13] but these

[12] Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion, 1901, pp. 34–35.

[13] Published in 1905: Eng. trans., The Truth of Religion, 1911, pp. 33–34.

do not alter its general bearing. It is allowed that the Enlightenment "differentiated too sharply reason and history, the individual life and tradition, and overestimated the power of any present moment of consciousness." But the contention that history can provide no foundation for religious convictions is still pronounced true, and the quotations from Lessing and Kant are still approved, and this from Fichte is added: "Let no one assert that it does no harm to cling to such historical beliefs. It is injurious in that subsidiary facts are given equal validity with essential ones, or, indeed, are presented as the essential facts, and consequently the main facts are suppressed and the conscience tormented." With such a view of history in its relation to religion, of course Eucken cannot find the roots of his religion, which he would still call Christianity, in Christ. "We can honor him," he tells us, "as a leader, a hero, a martyr; but we cannot directly bind ourselves to him, or root ourselves in him: we cannot unconditionally submit to him. Still less can we make him the centre of a worship. To do so, from our point of view, would be nothing less than an intolerable deification of a human being." [14] Eucken thus quite purely carries on the tradition of a non-historical, which is, of course, also in the nature of the case a christless Christianity.

There is much in the mental state of our times to add strength to this traditional distrust of history as a basis for religious convictions. Modern thought is not yet emancipated from that ingrained individualism which is impatient of all "external authority," and wishes each soul to be a law to itself. The very preoccupation of the age with history has moreover brought with it its nemesis. A wide-spread impression has grown up that in the crucible of historical criticism all historical magnitudes have melted; that the whole past has become uncertain and conjectural,

[14] Können wir noch Christen sein? 1911, p. 37. Eucken, in this work, asks if we can still be Christians, and answers yes,—but only by remoulding Christianity to fit our new philosophy which will not hear of a divine Redeemer or an expiatory redemption. "We have asked," he says in his closing words (p. 236), "whether we of today can still be Christians. We reply that not only can we be, but we must be. We can be Christians, however, only if Christianity be recognized to be a world-historical movement still in flux, if it be shaken out of its ecclesiastical petrifaction and placed upon a broader basis. In this are found the task of our time and the hope of the future."

if not absolutely unknowable; and that nothing solid is left to offer a foundation for faith. Looking upon themselves and all that they have, instinctively, as the product of historical development, men's hold upon even their most precious spiritual possessions has relaxed; everything is in a flux, and all alike, as it is the product of change, so is held to be subject to change. Christianity itself in the universal flow comes to be thought of only as a passing phase of religious thought, as only one among many religions, rising above the rest, if at all, only in degree. Many have even become surfeited with history, and, suffocated by its load of facts, react from what Nietzsche girds at as "the hypertrophy of history"[15] in the interests of "untrammelled thinking." Meanwhile the broadened historical horizon has dwarfed the significance of isolated historical events, which alone, it is said, are accessible to our observation. The imagination, fed on illimitable stretches of space and endless progressions of time, finds difficulty in attaching supreme importance to this or that historical incident, occurring at but a point of this boundless space and occupying but a moment of this measureless time. If men are disheartened by the uncertainties of history and irritated by its oppressive superfluity, they are even more dispirited by its littleness and insignificance as known to us. With what propriety, it is asked, "can a proposition about the happening of a particular incident at a certain time in a little corner of the earth" be represented as "one of the fundamental verities which every man ought to know and believe for his soul's health?"

This last sentence we have taken from an article by Arthur O. Lovejoy, which very fairly represents the manner in which this general point of view may still be advocated at the opening of the twentieth century. He calls his article, significantly, "The Entangling Alliance of Religion and History";[16] and, in the course of it, he advances most of the considerations in aversion to this alliance which we have just rapidly summarized from a statement, already doubtless sufficiently summary, by Ernst Troeltsch.[17]

[15] "Vom Nutzen und Schaden der Historie für das Leben," in Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, 1874, vol. ii², p. 210.

[16] Hibbert Journal, January, 1907, pp. 258–276: cf. esp. p. 269.

[17] Article, "Glaube und Geschichte" in Schiele and Zscharnack, Die Religion, vol. ii, coll. 1450–1452.

> Since [he argues] religion constitutes a man's ultimate and definitive intellectual and moral reaction upon his experience, and since it presupposes the possession of truths valid and significant for all men, religious belief will naturally affirm only [why "only"?] truths of a universal and cosmic bearing. It will deal exclusively [why "exclusively"?] with the "eternal" verities and ignore contingent and temporal matters-of-fact. . . . Its content will consist of propositions equally pertinent to the interests, and equally accessible to the knowledge [is the equality absolute?] of all such beings, at any time, in any place. . . . It will not make the belief in the occurrence or non-occurrence of specific local and temporal events any part of its essence.

The very spirit of Lessing is here,—even to Lessing's characteristic assumptions of definitions and characteristic exaggerations of statement. It is treated as axiomatic on the one hand that the whole truth-content of religion must be self-evident, and on the other that history can afford us only probabilities. The Deists, it is suggested, were in the essence of the matter right, when they contended that historical propositions are unfitted to enter into the truth-content of religion because, on the one hand, they cannot be universally known, and, on the other, they "do not strictly constitute knowledge at all." No beliefs about happenings, assuredly, can stand the test of the *Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*—if we take the terms strictly; nor can the actual occurrence of events be made more than probable, of remote and particularized events more than barely probable, of such events as are "contrary to the usual order" anything but improbable, so improbable that "it becomes at least debatable whether any amount of purely traditional or documentary evidence can offset" the presumption against them. It is recognized that Christianity is implicated, as is no other religion, with history; it is even allowed that its entanglement with historical facts was indispensable to its survival in the environment in which it first found itself struggling; but it is strenuously asserted that the historical elements which have thus become connected with it are not essential to it. The historical data with which it has been most intimately associated are gravely disputable; it is, indeed, "just those incidents to which theology has attached the greatest dogmatic weight" which have most

decisively "been removed from the sphere of the clearly ascertainable to that of the problematical." It is fortunate, therefore, that their reality is not of the highest importance from the religious point of view. Indeed, "religious history often becomes more available and more useful religiously when it is taken as poetry."

> If we take even the life and character of Jesus, and consider them solely with respect to their inspirational and exemplary value, it is not a question of primary *religious* importance whether that life and character existed in bodily incarnation upon the solid earth of Galilee, or chiefly in the devout imagination of earlier believers. There happen, just now, to be signs of a revival of the theory of the non-historicity of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . Suppose the theory established. . . . There would be some real gain. The Gospels would become more wonderful and more encouraging than before; for the profound wisdom and lofty character found in them would prove to be the expression, not of a single and unique religious genius, but of the spiritual idealism of many humble and unknown men. That a group of men should be able to conceive the hero of the Synoptic Gospels is more inspiring than that one wholly exceptional man should have been that hero—but, for the same reason, doubtless more improbable. In so far, then, as religious history simply affords ideals for our reverence and imitation, the ideals are no worse for their lack of past reality; they were at least the products of some other men's minds, and foreshadowings of possible realities to come, in the human nature of the future. Our feeling with respect to Jesus would undoubtedly be in significant ways altered. . . . But nothing of the deepest religious concernment can be at issue here.

There is much in these remarks which invites criticism. What it concerns us especially to note, however, is that they go beyond the assertion that matters of fact do not enter into the essence of religion, and that Christianity, as it is religion, may be indifferent to them. They seem to suggest that religion may thrive better in an atmosphere of fancy than of reality. Christianity could not only do very well without Jesus; it would perhaps be better off without Jesus. Jesus as a myth might make a stronger religious appeal, might be of a higher religious value, than Jesus as a fact. It would almost seem a pity, religiously speaking, that Jesus ever lived.[18]

[18] Lovejoy must not be thought singular in this suggestion: it is found also in the philosophers of whom he serves himself heir—for instance, in Kant and in Fichte; and it is intrinsic to the general point of view.

All cannot go quite so far as this. It does not appear that even the members of the Bremen *Protestantenverein* go so far. Most are satisfied with pronouncing Jesus unessential to Christianity, indifferent to Christianity, hardly noxious to it. The difference is rooted ultimately in a difference in point of departure. When the point of departure lies in a philosophical system, appeal to historical criticism is essentially in support of conclusions already attained. Most of those who nowadays pursue a line of reasoning substantially the same, begin nevertheless at the opposite pole. Their start is taken from historical criticism, and philosophical considerations are summoned only secondarily and subsidiarily, to give a basis to conclusions already adopted. Precisely the same philosophical assumptions are invoked, but they are not the primary presuppositions of the actual line of thought, and their logic is less prevalent. It is not so much in pride of pure reason and in contempt of history that these reasoners pronounce faith independent of Jesus, although they fall back on pure reason for a standing-ground, and express a hearty distrust in the trustworthiness of historical data. It is rather in timidity in the face of the processes of historical research, and in panic at the aspect of its results, that they seek and find a sheltered position in the independence of faith of historical entities. They are not so much tempted to despise Jesus because he is merely historical as they are tempted to despair of him for fear he is not historical enough. The christless Christianity which is springing more and more into view about us, is, in a word, the fruit less of a strong religious mysticism than of a weak historical scepticism, which has become anxious about the religious props on which it has hitherto depended.

It is the historical criticism of the Gospels "from Reimarus to Wrede" which has created the wide-reaching and deeply seated distrust in the historical tradition of Jesus that has of late become so evident. As Paul Wernle himself allows, in the very act of rebuking this distrust as excessive, "to us all it is more or less certain that the evangelists are not Jesus himself, that they are all already dependent on tradition, and that this tradition has already suffered all kinds of changes, by which the spirit of the disciples has in manifold ways been mingled with the

spirit of Jesus." [19] This being so, it is widely felt that no other attitude towards the person of Jesus remains possible except one at best of skepticism. There are in effect a whole series of Jesuses presented to our consideration. There is the dogmatic Christ which the great Christian community has worshipped through the ages with no other thought than that he was assuredly the Jesus Christ of the Biblical record. And there is this Jesus Christ of the Biblical record which the scientific study of the Bible has split up into several mutually inconsistent personalities. And there is the "historical Jesus" which Biblical criticism has hardly and with much variety of interpretation extracted from the presuppositions of the Biblical records. Where among these differing Jesuses can faith find a firm footing? The dogmatic Christ, we are told, has evaporated into a myth; the Biblical Jesus Christ has been disintegrated into the tesserae out of which its mosaic was formed; the "historical Jesus," itself the product of doubt, remains a doubtful and fluctuating figure. If we are to continue Christians, must we not at least seek for our Christianity a less unstable basis?

The air in critical circles is fairly palpitating with questions like these. The resulting state of mind finds a clearly argued expression in such a treatise as F. Ziller's *Modern Biblical Science and the Crisis of the Evangelical Church*.[20] The thesis maintained is that the progress of scientific study of the Bible has hopelessly shattered the entire basis on which the faith of the Christian church has hitherto rested. The results even of textual criticism already bring certain of the most cherished church-doctrines into peril. Literary criticism renders it very difficult to repose any real confidence in the Biblical writers. And material criticism has cast into the gravest doubt the facts related by these writers which are most indispensable to the established teaching. Finally, the science of comparative religion has reduced the foundations of the central doctrines and rites of the church to the level of heathen ideas and usages. The conceptions and ideas of the Bible have become only elements in the universal history

[19] Christliche Welt, February 17, 1910, p. 147.

[20] Die moderne Bibelwissenschaft und die Krisis der evangelischen Kirche, Tübingen, 1910, see especially pp. 99–100.

of religions, and the Biblical writings themselves only a particular section of general religious literature. The figure of Jesus has been well-nigh wiped off the page of history: the dogmatic Christ, the product of reflection, of course; and the Biblical Jesus Christ, a composition of disparate materials, equally of course; but also in large measure the "historical Jesus" himself, which it has been the object of science to disinter. "The historical Jesus, as we have seen, has been set aside by the scientific study of the Bible down to meagre remnants, and the foundation of the dogmatic Christ has been obliterated." Is there then anything left to rest upon except an "ideal Christ," a creation of fancy? Ziller, who, despite the ruin of historical Christianity which he sees about him, would fain remain a Christian, insists that there is. There is not, indeed, the "historical Jesus," doubt-born and incapable of sustaining faith, but there is the "historical Christ," which is not an ideal, but a fact. On this fact faith can stay itself.

> What the altruistic postulates of an inflated egoism, and what the postulates of pure reason cannot avail for, for that neither can those of the "ideal Christ" avail. That there is such a thing as practised self-renunciation, in contrast to nature; that on the basis of such a self-renunciation there can develop a high world-overcoming life,—this conviction cannot be derived either from the pure reason or from our practical ideals with the certainty that is required by faith, face to face with the known laws of nature. Only a fact can give the certainty for it, and this fact is "Christ."

But how is this fact of Christ to be reached? The reply takes the form of an apologue.

> All the day long [Ziller writes], I have had before me a wide mountain-ridge. In the morning, it stood out, deep-blue, in almost menacing nearness; towards noon, in a like-shaped whitish-grey mist on the horizon; and now, in the evening, it throws over the whole landscape the splendor of a golden reflection. Is it really the same mountain through it all? I think so. What I see is merely the effects which it works on my eye by means of the light straining through the changing atmosphere. What, then, if the mountain were no mountain; if it were only the boundless plain which seems to rise in the distance; if it were only cloud-forms deceiving my eyes? My glance sweeps over the meadows, through which my path runs.

> The brooks which water it come from yonder. The mountain itself I shall, indeed, not reach; its crags I shall not explore; but I believe in the existence of the mountain.[21]

So, he would say, he believes in the existence of the Christ from whom flow the streams of blessing which gladden the plain of human life. Thus, though the "historical Jesus" has been set aside "down to meagre remnants," the "historical Christ abides unshaken for faith." We seek, and we find, Him, however, not in a book, much less in a creed, but "in the entire, constantly developing Christianity in which we believe."

> Out of faith in the Christ vitally active here today, there grows up for us faith in the Christ of the past. The predicates which the past ascribed to him, we can no longer ascribe to him in the same sense, but we know how to value them from the standpoint of our faith; and though we no longer connect the same meaning with them, or though we permit them to be supplanted by others which express *for us* what is highest—we do it in the consciousness that we are only carrying forward a process in which the oldest Christianity has preceded us, and which others in their own fashion will follow us.[22]

Despairing of the "historical Jesus," Ziller, in other words, substitutes for him, as he says, a "Christ who varies with the changes of human thought." Christianity, transforming itself ceaselessly from age to age, finds for itself ever a transformed Christ, suited to its changed needs. Christ, in a word, grows with his church; and it would be as impossible for the church of today to believe in the Jesus of the first Christians as it would be for us to live today the life of two thousand years ago. It is out of the whole history of Christianity that God speaks to us of today, and Christ would be dead, did he not live on in the life of human development.[23]

We are not concerned for the moment with the validity of this representation. Paul Wernle is unhesitant in declaring it nonsense. It is nonsense, he asserts, to speak of modern critical research as having sapped our confidence in the "historical Jesus."

[21] Christliche Welt, May 5, 1910, p. 413. [22] Ibid.

[23] Die moderne Bibelwissenschaft, etc., p. 101. Cf. the very similar representation of Shirley Jackson Case, The Historicity of Jesus, 1912, pp. 306–307.

There continue to be, no doubt, as there always have been, skeptical writers; in late years, for example, there are Wellhausen, Wrede, Schweitzer; but they must not be taken too seriously. "I do not find that, in its essential traits, the person of Jesus has even in the least become uncertain or controversial through the investigations of recent years."[24] And how, indeed, could historical science, let us honor it ever so highly, "avail against the voice of a history of nearly two-thousand years' duration in which Jesus and faith in Jesus—I purposely bring them together—have been the greatest of impulsive and constructive forces?" It is greater nonsense still, Wernle declares, to pretend to retain Christ when the historical Jesus has been abandoned. Once convince him that the historical Jesus has been set aside by science, and faith in Christ has no further personal interest to him: faith in God without Christ would then be his only recourse. "This whole postulation of Jesus and Christ," he adds, "abandoning the one and retaining the other, is nothing but a miserable product of opportunism. It was the weakest point in the old Liberal Christianity, and it has not been bettered by any new grounding. What we retain in our hands when the historical Jesus falls away is just myths and phantasms, which can afford no support to our faith."[25]

Meanwhile, however, we observe Ziller abandoning the "historical Jesus" and clinging to the "historical Christ," who "still lives in the church." In this, he but follows an example set by Schleiermacher,[26] and from his day on imitated by a long series of writers occupying essentially the same position, but differing immensely among themselves in the completeness or incomplete-

[24] Christliche Welt, February 17, 1910, p. 749.

[25] Christliche Welt, May 12, 1910, p. 441.

[26] Cf. Otto Kirn, Glaube und Geschichte, 1900, p. 22: "According to what has been said, we may trace back to Schleiermacher the idea which recurs through the nineteenth century in manifold modifications, that the figure of the Redeemer, ever only uncertainly or indistinctly established by historical research, is lifted, by the experience of his redemptive power continuing in the community, to a certainty and clearness sufficient for faith. The effect of Christ, capable of being experienced by every man seeking redemption, permits (so it is said) the inference to a personality standing at the head of the community, and in union with God, even if we cannot otherwise come to know anything whatever about him that is historically assured."

ness, on the one hand, of their abandonment of the historical Jesus, and, on the other, of their clinging to a living Christ. At the one extreme we may discover—shall we say even a Martin Kähler? or shall we content ourselves with saying a Wilhelm Herrmann?[27] At the other stand the theologians of the Bremen *Protestantenverein*. Those who gather around the former node, only sit loosely to the "historical Jesus" as he is presented to us in the Gospel narrative, and can in no way do without the "historical Christ," on whom, indeed, their whole religious system hangs. Those who gather around the latter, though they may or may not, for themselves, feel any real doubt that Jesus really lived, yet are quite able to get along wholly without him in their religious system, whether we call him Jesus or Christ. It is these latter, accordingly, who are express "christless Christians."

Perhaps it may be well to keep near home here and select as examples of this truest christless Christianity only certain prophets of our own.

A very good example is afforded by Douglas C. Macintosh.[28] With the historicity of Jesus, Macintosh has for himself no difficulty; but neither does he feel any imperative need of the living Christ. He finds the historical Jesus useful; the loss of him would be a great loss,—a sentimental loss, a pedagogical loss, above all

[27] Cf. what is said of Kähler and Herrmann as representatives of historical skepticism with respect to the "historical Jesus" by Otto Ritschl in an article entitled, "Der geschichtliche Christus, der christliche Glaube, und die theologische Wissenschaft" in the Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, vol. iii, 1893, pp. 373 f. "There is accordingly at present no Rationalistic tendency, threatening to bring into question the value for theology of historical investigation. It is true, however, that the confidence which has been hitherto overwhelmingly felt in the result of theological historical research is made doubtful by a skeptical mood which seems to be gaining ground with many theologians. . . . To this skeptical mood . . . Kähler has hitherto given the strongest expression." But Herrmann "shares Kähler's historical skepticism, ascribing to historical research the ability to attain only probable judgments." "In spite of these unfavorable judgments as to the capacity of historical science, Kähler and Herrmann are too deeply persuaded of the nature of Christianity as an historical religion not to lay stress on this—that the Christ which historical research cannot reach with its instruments, but is laid hold of now by faith, is the historical Christ. In contrast with him Kähler speaks of the 'so-called historical Jesus' as a creature of phantastic arbitrariness." See also Karl Dunkmann, Das religiöse Apriori und die Geschichte, 1911, pp. 44–45.

[28] American Journal of Theology, July, 1911, pp. 362–372; January, 1912, pp. 106–110.

a loss to the easy attainment of Christian certitude. He would even, it appears, allow that the Christ-ideal is indispensable—that it is, indeed, precisely the differentia of Christianity; and he does not see his way to accounting for the clearness at least of this ideal without assuming the historical Jesus, and in this sense, therefore, he is prepared to admit that the historicity of Jesus is "historically indispensable." Indispensable, that is, to the historian, not to the Christian. What the Christian must have is the Christ-ideal, not Christ. "Christian faith is trust in the Christ-like God; whether the Christ be regarded as historical fact or mere ideal, it is trust in the God of holy and unselfish love, whose purpose is the spiritual redemption of humanity and who is revealed in the Christ-like everywhere." Was not Jesus himself—if he existed—a Christian, the first Christian? And was "the historical Jesus" needed for him as the presupposition of his faith? We cannot distinguish between the "religion of Jesus" and the "gospel of Christ": the "gospel of Christ" is just the "religion of Jesus." He is not the content of our faith, but only, historically, the first of the series of believers of that particular kind which we call Christian. Say that the series began in another, in a later, than he, and that he is a myth. What essential difference does that make to our faith? The "Christian God-idea" in any case remains; and the "Christian God-idea" is constitutive of Christianity.

> So far as the content of Christianity is concerned, our religion would remain essentially the same, whatever judgment might be rendered upon questions of historical fact.
>
> The disproof, or rendering seriously doubtful, of the historicity of Jesus would not mean the disappearance of any essential content from the Christian religion.
>
> It is not incorrect to say that the essence of Christianity is Jesus Christ, if [Oh that "if"!] it be recognized that it is also possible to set forth the essence of Christianity without reference to the historic Jesus.
>
> Granted the historicity of Jesus, was not *his* faith fully Christian? And yet *he* could not make that faith rest upon the historicity of a person of ideal character who had gone before him. If then we believe in the historicity of Jesus, we must admit that Christian faith has been possible in the case of one at least who did not believe in the historicity of any ideal Jesus before his day.

"Without the historical Jesus we may find ourselves with less verification of our faith than we thought." That is a loss; but it is not an irreparable loss, since we may find sufficient verification elsewhere. Meanwhile,

> Christianity, while enjoying the advantages of historical verification, has this qualification for being the "absolute" and universal religion, that its fate is not bound up with the actuality of any one reputed fact of history, even when that "fact" is the one which surpasses every other fact in its value to humanity.

In a single word, Christ does not form any part of the content of Christianity, and therefore his historicity cannot be indispensable to Christianity. "Spiritual religion is self-dependent," and finds all its resources in itself; it cannot therefore be dependent "on the religious experience and inner assurance of another, even though that other be the Jesus of history."

An almost equally good example is supplied by Frank H. Foster,[29] the stress of whose argument is laid on the general consideration that our religious relation cannot rest on the uncertainties of history. His particular manner of phrasing his contention is that "in some important respects it makes no difference to the modern thinker whether Jesus was a historical person or not," because "no system of truth which shall dominate the mind and claim authority over the conduct of man can rest upon the reality of any historical person." "Salvation" is "an inner state of the soul," and therefore cannot be something "'objectively' secured by the work of a historical person." "Truth is truth" only as it "shines to the mind by its own light," and therefore "cannot be something which depends upon the existence of the person who first spoke it." If "salvation," "truth," were thus dependent on the historicity of a person, they "would be exposed to every breath of criticism." They must not be left in that perilous condition.

> Though Jesus should be proved never to have existed, the truth which has come down to us, and which we have received because of its self-evidencing value, and which we have found to work out such great results in the liberation of our spirits from the thraldom

[29] American Journal of Theology, October, 1911, pp. 584–594.

> of sin and the establishment of holy relations with our Heavenly Father, would still be true, and its effects would remain unaltered. In this sense, a historical Jesus is unnecessary.

For himself, Foster does not at all doubt that Jesus was an historical person. He confesses, indeed, that "of no single historical detail can we be absolutely sure, unless it be his death by crucifixion"; though, somewhat inconsistently, he at once draws up a tolerably detailed picture of the real Jesus and sets him before us as "a realized ideal,"—"a realized ideal," moreover, let us note, so lofty that none of his followers could have invented the portraiture. His historicity remains nevertheless unessential, since our real ground, for example, for acknowledging him sinless, is that this acknowledgment is useful to us—"our final reason for accepting it is its value"; and a "realized ideal" is after all fundamentally an ideal, and owes its existence as such and whatever power it may exert to its erection into an ideal, not to its historical embodiment, if it chances to be historically embodied, in a person. "No system of truth which shall dominate the mind and claim authority over the conduct of men," we will remember, "can rest upon the reality of any historical personality."

It is scarcely necessary to multiply examples further. We may pass from instance to instance; but do not escape from a common circle of ideas. R. Roberts assumes to speak for the class, and may be accepted as doing so, when he announces [30] that "the supreme need of the hour in these matters is the disengagement of religion from its dependence on historical personalities." "Truth is truth," he declares, "whether uttered by Sophocles or Plato in Athens, by Hillel or Jesus in Palestine, by Seneca or Aurelius at Rome." "Religion, too, rests not on inspired or divine personalities, but on the order of the world." "And if, in the inevitable evolution of the not-distant future, Jesus too should disappear from the assured certainties of the world, man would not cease to be religious." P. W. Schmiedel—if we may take advantage of the vogue of his writings in their English form to refer to him here—speaks, with the greater caution of his better scholarship, of the prospect of the elimination of the figure of Jesus from "the assured certainties of the world": "As a critical

[30] Hibbert Journal, October, 1909, pp. 100–101.

historian I can only say that I see no prospect of this." And it is a deeper note of personal appreciation of Jesus—and of indebtedness to him—which he sounds. But the purport of his declaration is the same.

> My inmost religious convictions would suffer no harm, even if I now felt obliged to conclude that Jesus never lived. It would, of course, be a loss to me, if I could no longer look back and up to him as a historical person; but I should feel assured that the measure of piety which had long become a part of my nature could not be lost, because I could no longer derive it from him.[31]

Always there lie at the basis of the reasoning the twin assumptions of the old Rationalism: the assumption of the adequacy of pure reason to produce out of its own inalienable endowments the whole body of religious truth which it is necessary or possible for reasonable men to embrace, and the assumption of the inadequacy of history to lay a foundation of fact sufficiently assured to supply a firm basis on which the religious convictions and aspirations of reasonable men may rest. And always there is built upon these assumptions the denial that Christianity,—as it is a religion worthy of the acceptance of reasonable men, and actually exerting influence over reasonable men, and supplying the forms in which their religious life is expressed,—can possibly be dependent for its existence or power on any events or personalities in its past history, no matter how prominent a place these events or personalities may actually have occupied in its historical origination or its continued historical manifestation. The immediate motive which leads to this declaration of independence of historical events and personalities may differ from individual to individual: it is perhaps very commonly a feeling of uncertainty as to the actual historicity of the facts and personalities in question, and a desire to protect what is thought of as Christian faith from the danger incident to this uncertainty. The personal attitude of the reasoners towards Jesus may also differ greatly: most commonly, no doubt, a strong sense of indebtedness to Jesus and a deep feeling of reverence to him are preserved. But the general line of argument remains the same. History can give us only probabilities. Religion, therefore, which requires cer-

[31] Jesus in Modern Criticism, Eng. trans., 1907, p. 85.

tainties, cannot be dependent on historical facts. Jesus is at best an historical fact. Christianity, therefore, as it is truly religion, cannot possibly be dependent on Jesus. So far accordingly as Christianity is truly religion, it must be independent of Jesus.[32] What are we to say to these things?

It can scarcely be expected that at this time of day the ancient debate with Rationalism should be taken up afresh and threshed out over again. Butler's *Analogy* is still extant, with its initial insistence upon probability as the guide of life, and its solid proof of the reasonableness of an historical revelation. It might not even be amiss to invite those to whom matters of fact appear to be intrinsically doubtful, or at least to become at once on occurrence incapable of establishment beyond "reasonable doubt," to bring their philosophy down to earth by a course of reading in such primary text-books as Greenleaf *On Evidence* and Ram *On Facts*. Of course man is a religious being, and by the very necessity of his nature will have a religion. We have not needed to wait for W. Bousset to tell us [33] that religion has its seat in the aboriginal disposition of the reason, and we have only to look within ourselves to find it as the central fundamental law of our life. To name none other, John Calvin has told us long ago that, entering into the very constitution of man, and, above all else, distinguishing him from the brute, there is an ineradicable *sensus deitatis*, which—so far from lying inert within him—is a fertile *semen religionis;* and that accordingly all men have, and must needs have, relig-

[32] Compare the description of this type of thought by Shirley Jackson Case, The Historicity of Jesus, 1912, pp. 319 f.

[33] In his address at the Berlin Congress of Free Christianity, 1910, under the title, Die Bedeutung der Person Jesu für den Glauben. History according to Bousset gives us only symbols, which cannot demonstrate, but only illustrate, the eternal ideas that reside in our bosoms. Founders of religions, Jesus among them, as historical entities, have their place among these symbols. Neither the certainty nor the contents of our faith can find its grounding in symbols. On the one hand, as regards Jesus, "What do we know that is historically certain of this Jesus of Nazareth, his life, his teaching and his person" (p. 4). Yet, on the other, "the portrait of Jesus as it is depicted in the gospels by his immediate community, as romance and truth, remains and will remain more effective than all attempts at historical reconstruction, however exact they may be" (p. 17). Effective, that is, as a symbol; for as Wobbermin (Geschichte und Historie in der Religionswissenschaft, 1911, pp. 47 f.) points out, Bousset leaves to Jesus no significance as source of religion.

ion. It is another question, however, whether this constitutional religion, which man cannot choose but have, is adequate to his need in the situation in which he actually finds himself, a situation which Eucken tells us has been most truly appreciated not by the optimists but the pessimists.[34] It is not obvious, to say the least, that a provision of nature must be competent also for unnatural conditions; that a power of living implies also a *vis naturae medicatrix* which in the presence of disease renders the exhibition of remedies impertinent. Though "pure reason" be sufficient for the religion of pure nature, what warrants the assumption that its sufficiency is unimpaired when nature is no longer pure?

It was the fault of the eighteenth century, in its pride of intellect and virtue, to neglect in its religious theorizing the evil case of man, and to proclaim under the name of "natural religion" an abstract scheme of a few meagre truths of reason as the sum of all religion, and, as such, the whole religious content of Christianity, the presently dominant religion,—which was thus represented as, so far as it was truly religious, "as old as creation." We have passed beyond the possibility of such shallow intellectualism now; we all repeat with avidity Bernhard Pünjer's caustic jibe that the difficulty with this so-called "natural religion" was that it was neither natural nor a religion. But have we bettered things in the essence of the matter? The misery of humanity may be more poignantly present to our consciousness, and even, in a sense, its sin; religion may be more prevalently thought of as "faith," rather than as opinion; the goodness of God may fill the whole horizon of our thought of him, and loving trust in his love form the entire reaction of our souls in his presence. But are we doing justice to that inexpugnable sense of guilt which constitutes the most fundamental and persistent deliverance of our moral consciousness? Shall we hope to soothe it to sleep with platitudes about the goodness of God; assurances that God is love, and that love will not reckon with sin? That deep moral self-condemnation which is present as a primary factor in all

[34] See the striking passage on the radical evil which afflicts the human race in Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion, 1st ed., 1901, pp. 72 f.; The Truth of Religion, 1911, pp. 96 f.

truly religious experience protests against all attempts merely to appease it. It cries out for satisfaction. No moral deduction can persuade it that forgiveness of sins is a necessary element in the moral order of the world. It knows on the contrary that indiscriminate forgiveness of sin would be precisely the subversion of the moral order of the world. The annulment of guilt is the annulment of the law of righteousness, out of the breach of which guilt arises; and the law of righteousness is only another name for the moral order of the world. There is a moral paradox in the forgiveness of sins which cannot be solved apart from the exhibition of an actual expiation. No appeal to general metaphysical or moral truths concerning God can serve here; or to the essential kinship of human nature to God; or, for the matter of that, to any example of an attitude of trust in the divine goodness upon the part of a religious genius, however great, or to promises of forgiveness made by such a one, or even—may we say it with reverence—made by God himself, unsupported by the exhibition of an actual expiation. The sinful soul, in throes of self-condemnation, is concerned with the law of righteousness ingrained in his very nature as a moral being, and cannot be satisfied with goodness, or love, or mercy, or pardon. He cries out for expiation. And expiation, in its very nature, is not a principle but a fact, an event which takes place, if at all, in the conditions of time and space. A valid religion for sinful man includes in it, accordingly, of necessity an historical element, an actually wrought expiation for its sin. It is the very nerve of Christianity and the essence of its appeal to men—by virtue of which it has won its way in the world—that it provides this historical element and proclaims an actual expiation of human sin. As it has been eloquently put:[35]

> Only the fact that Christ stands out in history as surety of the gracious will of God, that in God's name he punishes sin and calls the sinner to himself, that in holy suffering he endures the lot of sinners in order to convict them of their sin and free them from it, that as the Risen One he brings them the assurance of justification and of eternal life, is able to transform human seeking after salvation into finding. Severed from this fact which forms its very

[35] Otto Kirn, Glaube und Geschichte, 1900, pp. 47–48. Cf. the whole passage, pp. 47–50.

essence, faith is nothing, an empty desire, a question without an answer.

It would be sad for humanity, needing thus above all things an actual expiation that it may have warrant to trust in God's forgiving love, if no such warrant can be given it because of the inability of the human mind to attain certainty with reference to matters of fact. It is, indeed, difficult to see how man could sustain his being and prosecute his common tasks in the world, if matters of fact are intrinsically uncertain, or become immediately uncertain on their occurrence. Man is, after all said, a creature of time and space, and all that he does and all that he experiences takes place in the conditions of time and space, and becomes at once on taking place matter of history. He could acquire no knowledge whatever, the whole discipline of life would be lost to him, if uncertainty were really the mark of the historical. We deceive ourselves, for instance, if we fancy we may distinguish in principle between historical facts as uncertain and scientific facts as certain. As Lessing reminds us, we cannot base certainties on uncertainties; and the material of all the sciences is in point of fact historical. "Every science," observes Eberhard Vischer,[36] "builds its conclusions on the particular experiences which men have had. Every observation in the natural sciences, every experiment, gives us in the first instance not knowledge of what is, but of what at the moment of the observation, of the experiment, the observer experiences. . . . An experience had by the scientific observer, therefore an historical fact, is the foundation-stone on which is grounded, as in general the entire conduct of man, so also all scientific attainment." If, then, historical facts are by their very nature uncertain,—"if nothing that befalls man can be certainly known, then all scientific certainty whatever passes into the realm of the impossible."

It may be suspected that the current assumption that historical facts cannot rise above probabilities, derives at least some of its force and persistency from a confusion of two senses of the word "probable." As the opposite of "demonstrative," "probable"

[36] Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, 1898, p. 200, article on "Die geschichtliche Gewissheit und der Glaube an Jesus Christus." Compare also his lecture on Jesus Christus in der Geschichte, Tübingen, 1912, where the discussion is more popular in form.

refers to the nature of the ground on which the judgment of truth or reality rests; as the opposite of "certain" it refers to the measure of assurance which the grounds on which this judgment rests are adapted to produce. Historical facts may be "only probable" in the one usage and yet not less than "certain" in the other. This ambiguity of the term seems to be reflected in a certain embarrassment which is observable in its use in the present connection. Thus G. B. Foster talks of historical evidence as capable of producing only "probable certainty"; Otto Kirn of it as producing at best only "relative certainty"; while Heinrich von Sybel declares it able to produce "conclusive certainty,"—which he then explains by the further declaration that "historical science is capable of attaining to altogether exact knowledge." [37] "Conclusive certainty" is of course pleonastic, and "probable certainty," "relative certainty," are contradictions in terms, the employment of which only bears witness to the feeling of the writers using them that after all historical facts are, or may be, "certain." Let it go at that. In point of fact, there is nothing more certain than a matter of fact: what is, certainly is; and the certainty of demonstration cannot be more sure than the certainty of experience. It is no more sure that two and two make four, than that the two nuts which I have in each hand when brought together are four,—though I arrive at my certainty in the one case *a priori* by demonstrative reasoning, and in the other *a posteriori* by actual experience. The ground of certainty in both cases is my confidence in my faculties.

It may be urged, to be sure, that history, as commonly spoken of, deals only with past experiences, and it is only present experience which is "certain." But experience does not cease to be experience with the passage of time: and (as it has been well phrased) "reality that has been made" is no less reality than "reality in the making"; "reality once 'made,' is 'made' for ever." [38] If what is, certainly is, then what has been, just as certainly has been; and its actuality as matter of fact is not in

[37] Ueber die Gesetze des historischen Wissens, 2d ed., 1864, p. 17; or in Vorträge und Aufsätze, 1874, p. 11.

[38] F. R. Tennant, "Historical Fact in Relation to the Philosophy of Religion." Hibbert Journal, vol. viii, 1909–10, p. 173.

the least disturbed by the irrelevant circumstance that it has occurred at one point of time rather than at another. Indeed, as the writer just cited playfully points out, distance of time may be neutralized by distance in space. To an observer on the dog-star, earthly events which to an observer on earth occurred a generation ago are present-day facts; and by merely stationing ourselves at the proper distance we may recover any occurrence of the past to "immediate perception." We cannot, to be sure, take our post of observation at will in Orion or the Pleiades, but we need not on that account cast the actuality of the actual into doubt or declare ourselves incapable of assuring ourselves of it. If free transportation through the immeasurable reaches of space is denied us, there are other ways of getting at the actualities of the past which we need not on that account deny ourselves.

For one thing, we need not persist in looking at past occurrences as each an isolated event, standing absolutely out of relation with all other events, up to which therefore no lines of approach lead. Past events still live in other vibrations also, besides those which, trembling through the ether, carry notification of their occurrence to the depths of space. Everything that occurs affects everything else that occurs, and history must be conceived not merely as a series of linked chains passing side by side through time; but as one woven network covering the whole past, and running with unbroken web through the present into the illimitable future. Not by one line only but by manifold lines, therefore, we can travel from any point which for the moment may chance to be the present, over the woven pattern of the fabric to any other point, which holds changelessly its proper position in the whole, and its fixed relations to all the other parts of it. Of course, such creatures as we are cannot contemplate the whole pattern in all its details; we are like insects climbing slowly along a thread of some tapestry. There are myriads of occurrences of even the recent past which are gone beyond all hope of recovery. At best we can know a few of the events that have occurred, and them only in part. But the past is not singular in this. We do not know the present, even that present with which we are most intimately concerned, in all of its details, or in any of its details per-

fectly. We know nothing except in part. Every sparklet of human knowledge shines out from a limitless surrounding of obscurity. But we can yet know truly where we can know only in part. And because we cannot know all the past, we must not therefore fancy that we can know nothing that is past. There are occurrences which stand out so brightly against the enveloping darkness, which have wrought so powerfully on the course of events that have succeeded them, which are connected with us by so many and so deeply marked lines of effects, that we might as well pretend not to be able to see the sun in the heavens as not to be able to perceive them looming in the past, however distant. There are no doubt some who do not see the sun. They are blind.

Whether the origins of the Christian religion belong to this class of outstanding facts—the great peaks rising out of the plain with such prominence that no observer looking over the field of history can miss them—is merely a question of the evidence. This evidence is, however, of the most compelling and varied kind. It is not merely documentary, subject to those processes of testing which we lump together under the name of criticism. It is institutional as well; and it is more than institutional. The seed out of which Christianity has grown may be known, like other seed, by that which has grown out of it: "by their fruits ye shall know them." Christianity itself is a witness to the nature of its origins; and to Christianity must be added the whole world in its development through two thousand years. It is futile to ask, as has been asked with the processes of historical criticism in mind: "Is any one entitled to believe, or to ask others to believe, in specific historical matters of fact except upon historical evidence?"[39] The question is already an-

[39] A. O. Lovejoy, Hibbert Journal, vol. v, January, 1907, p. 269. Cf. the much more cautious statement of O. Ritschl, Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, vol. iii, 1893, p. 376. Per contra, cf. Eberhard Vischer, Jesus Christus in der Geschichte, 1912, pp. 35 f.: had the historical records preserved for us no single intimation of the existence of a Dante, the existence of the Divina Commedia would compel his postulation, and had historical records preserved for us no single intimation of the existence of Jesus Christ,—or, what comes to the same thing, should historical criticism obliterate every existing intimation of his existence,—there are effects about us, quite as palpable as the Divina Commedia, which would compel his postulation.

swered by Lessing in that striking refutation of his own historical skepticism which he gives in his *Axiomata:*[40]

> There is still one question over which I cannot wonder enough, which the Herr Pastor puts with a confidence that seems to imply that only one answer is possible. "Had the New Testament books not been written, and had they not come down to us," he asks, "would there have remained in the world a trace of what Jesus did and taught?" God forbid that I should ever think so meanly of Christ's teaching as to dare to answer this question with a No. No, I would not repeat such a No, even had an angel from heaven dictated it to me, to say nothing of a case where it is only a Lutheran pastor who would put it into my mouth. All that occurs in the world leaves traces in the world behind it, even though men can not always point them out at once; and should Thy teaching only, divine Friend of man, which Thou didst command, not to be written but to be preached, have effected nothing, absolutely nothing, from which its origin might be recognized? Should Thy words have been words of life only when transformed into dead letters?

We are not fleeing from the results of historical criticism to take refuge in the argument from effects. We shall appeal, indeed, from a naturalistically biassed to an unbiassed historical criticism; but we shall have no difficulty in trusting the latter to give us not only an actual Jesus, but a supernatural Christ, and in Him a supernatural redemption. We are only concerned now to point out that even such a vindication of the fact-basis of Christianity on historico-critical grounds does not exhaust the evidence for it; that there is still further evidence of the richest and most varied kind for the origin of Christianity in a supernatural founder; that there is, for example, the evidence from effects, which, resting as it does on the causal judgment, has much of the quality of demonstration.[41] "What then is it," asks a recent writer,[42] "which gives us knowledge of what has been?" "Three things," he answers, "monuments, traditions,

[40] Lessings sämtliche Schriften, Lachmann's ed., 1897, vol. xiii, p. 120.

[41] The value of the argument from effects in establishing historical facts is expounded at length by Eberhard Vischer as cited above, and applied in detail to the facts of the Christian origins. Cf. the review of the lecture, Jesus Christus in der Geschichte, in the Princeton Theological Review for October, 1912.

[42] Christliche Welt, February 17, 1910, pp. 162–163.

effects"; and then he adds another well-known saying of Lessing's: "When the paralytic *experiences* the healing shocks of the electric spark, what does he care whether Nollet or Franklin, or neither of them, is right?"[43]—and concludes: "So may the pious man be of good courage, while the learned are disputing over particular problems of the gospel-history. But as to the presence and as to the nature of the power which then came into the world, he too has a little word to say." He has. And though this "little word" may not be quite the same word which either this writer or Lessing might suggest, it is a word which has supreme value, and which combines with the abundant evidence from other quarters and of other orders to render the facts which belong to the origins of Christianity the most certain of all the facts which have occurred in the world.[44]

We are not absurdly undertaking to prove the historicity of Jesus in ten words. Happily, our present task does not require this proof of us; and happily also, as has already been intimated, the work has been perhaps sufficiently done for us—though in many more than ten words—by a multitude of recent writers who have sprung to the defence of the historicity of Jesus against its denial by the new radicalism most prominently represented at present by Arthur Drews. One of the results of the promulgation of this denial for which we may be thankful has been that some check has been put upon the less guarded expression of historical scepticism on the part of the Liberal theologians, and there has been called out some stronger assertion and fuller exposition of the more positive side of their conception of the historical origins of Christianity than it has been usual for them to give.[45] This has been a gain. Much has, no doubt, been left

[43] Axiomata, 1778; Lessings sämtliche Schriften, Lachmann's ed., 1897, vol. xiii, p. 134. Lessing is in this passage defending this proposition as previously made by him, and denying that he considers this experimental evidence the only convincing evidence of the truth of Christianity.

[44] "Jesus," says Erich Foerster (Christliche Welt, 1909, no. 52, p. 1249), "is a fact in the history of our race, and this fact cannot be eliminated by any dilettantism, however scientifically garnished. He who does not wish to turn his back on all reality must recognize it and adjust himself to it."

[45] Heinrich Weinel, Ist das "liberale" Jesusbild widerlegt? 1910, has been particularly candid in chiding his colleagues for their excesses in the one direction and their shortcomings in the other.

to be desired, but it has been pleasant to see such writers as W. Bousset and Johannes Weiss take up even so far the rôle of "apologists." What we have been attempting to do is merely, by a brief statement of the actual state of the case with reference to the historicity of Jesus, to wash in a background against which the true character and significance of the christless Christianity which is being exploited about us may be thrown up into clear relief. There really is no occasion for a panic with reference to the historicity of Jesus; and there is no need of such drastic measures as those pursued by the promulgators of our christless Christianity to allay the rising panic with respect to it. It is only among the old Liberals and—on somewhat different grounds —the members of the school of Ritschl that panic here is natural. The mordant criticism of the evangelical history practised by the old Liberals has left them without defence when this criticism is pressed a step further and the historicity of Jesus is denied,—requiring, though they do, the historicity of Jesus not only to account for the origin of Christianity according to their view of its origin, but to give distinctiveness and distinction to their conception of what Christianity is. It has been the peculiarity of the school of Ritschl, in its effort to preserve Christianity from destruction by the assaults of historical criticism no less than by those of philosophy and science, to proclaim the independence of faith of all historical facts as well as of all metaphysical notions. What defence have they when the fact of Christ is included in the facts of which Christianity is independent? Yet "the fact of Christ" bears with them the whole weight of Christianity.[46] Our christless Christians have passed beyond all this. Indifference to Christ may have much the same practical effects as denial of the existence of Jesus; but it is a specifically different attitude and throws into the foreground specifically different questions. It has no interest in the historicity of Jesus. It has no interest in the living Christ. Its sole interest is in Christianity. It does not follow, however, that the historicity of Jesus

[46] On the Ritschlian attitude to historical facts and its sequences cf. E. Cremer, "Der Glaube und die Thatsachen," in Greifswalder Studien: theologische Abhandlungen Hermann Cremer . . . dargebracht, 1895, pp. 261–283; G. Vos, "Christian Faith and the Truthfulness of the Bible History," in Princeton Theological Review, vol. iv, 1906, pp. 289–305.

has no bearing on it; or the nature of the Jesus who is historical. Conceivably, a real Jesus may be more difficult to ignore than an imaginary one; especially if the Jesus that is real is a Jesus whom it is not easy to ignore, who has brought into the world influences and set at work forces which cannot be disregarded or escaped. In any event it is important to approach the consideration of christless Christianity with a clear understanding that the Christ it would ignore is not a doubtful Christ but a real Christ, is not an inert Christ but an active Christ.[47]

The particular question raised meanwhile by christless Christianity is not that of the historicity of Jesus but that of the nature of Christianity, or, as it is fashionable nowadays to phrase it, "the essence of Christianity." It is only when "Christianity" has come to be looked upon as little more than a modern man's "religious reaction upon the whole realm of reality—past and present—available for him," "the total embodiment of the actual religious attainments of modern men in a modern environment" —whatever this "reaction," these "attainments," may chance to be—as it has been described by a not wholly unsympathetic historian,[48] that the question of the indifference of "Christianity" to Jesus can be seriously raised. Douglas C. Macintosh [49] very frankly allows that to all that has hitherto borne the name of Christianity the historicity of Jesus has been indispensable, or, to speak more adequately, the living Jesus has stood at the very centre of thought and faith. To the "early disciples of Jesus," whose faith hinged on the messiahship of Jesus; to "the Greek Christian development," whose entire teaching and trust turned on the reality of a divine incarnation in humanity; to "Christian faith in its mediaeval form, whether Romanist or Protestant," which grounded all its hope in the substitutive sacrifice of the God-man—to all these alike Jesus forms the very core of Christianity. It is only when historical—or if the word pleases better,

[47] Richard Rothe even a half-century ago sounded a warning against attempting to root faith in the *merely* historical Jesus, who lived and died two thousand years ago. "If," he declared, "this Christ is not to be altogether ignored and stricken out of history, if he is to be permitted to play any rôle and to be believed in at all, he must absolutely be conceived also as the *living* Christ."

[48] S. J. Case, as cited, p. 321.

[49] American Journal of Theology, vol. xv, July, 1911, pp. 304 f.

traditional—Christianity has suffered a sea-change and become "the Christianity of to-day," that it can be contended that "the disproof or rendering seriously doubtful of the historicity of Jesus need not mean the disappearance of any essential content from the Christian religion." The question thus concerns not Christianity in its historical sense, but "our religion," "of to-day"; and it might perhaps be better phrased, not, Is Christ essential to the Christian faith? but, Is the so-called Christianity of today to which Christ is not essential still Christian?

Ernst Troeltsch has treated the matter more at large and with his wonted thoroughness and candor in a lecture which he has recently published under the title of *The Significance of the Historicity of Jesus for Faith.*[50] The question which he here raises is twofold: first, whether it is "still" possible to speak of an inner essential significance of Jesus for faith; and secondly, whether, that being answered in the negative, the historicity of Jesus is therefore indifferent to the "Christianity" which alone remains possible for modern culture. This latter question also Troeltsch answers with a negative, and thus comes forward as the advocate of the indispensableness of Jesus to even the most attenuated faith which still cares to call itself Christian. "So long as there exists a Christianity in any sense whatever it will be bound up with the central place of Christ in worship."

The word "still" in the former member of Troeltsch's question intimates that in his view a change has taken place in men's conception of what Christianity is and imports, and that it is only because of this change that the question suggested can be raised. Troeltsch does not hesitate to speak of this change as a veritable "transformation[51] of Christianity." Formerly Christians have believed in a divine Christ "propitiating God and thus freeing men from the consequences of their infection with original sin." To raise the question of the historicity of Jesus from this standpoint would be simply to call in question the right of Christianity to exist. It is only when we have learned, like David Friedrich Strauss (in his Christian period), to distinguish between

[50] Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben, Tübingen, 1911. Cf. the review of it in the Princeton Theological Review for October, 1912.

[51] "Umwandelung," p. 8.

the principle of Christianity and the person of Christ, and have come to see that what we call Christianity is just "a particular faith in God, a peculiar knowledge of God, with its corresponding mode of life, or, as it is called, a religious idea, a religious principle,"—so that there is no historical redemptive work postulated in the background,—that we may ask ourselves with any meaning whether there exists any necessity for the assumption of an historical Jesus. Even on this ground, however, a negative answer is not to be taken for granted. There even exist some who have come so far,—to whom therefore "redemption is not something once for all completed in the work of Christ, and thereafter only to be applied to individuals, but an occurrence continually completing itself afresh in the action of God on the soul by means of the knowledge of God" wrought by faith,—to whom a negative answer is still impossible. This is because they "connect this redeeming faith-knowledge with the knowledge and recollection of the historical personality of Jesus, although this comes into consideration with them, not in its miraculous element, nor in its particular teachings, but only in the total effect of the religious personality." It is "the later, ecclesiastical Schleiermacher" that Troeltsch has in view here, and especially Ritschl and Herrmann. With them "all notion of a historical redemptive miracle, occurring once for all," indeed, is lacking; but with them also the faith-knowledge that constitutes Christianity is "bound to the historical personality of Christ, by which alone power or certitude is lent it." In this, he contends, there is betrayed lurking at the back of the brain a remnant of the old doctrine of original sin; there persists a notion "of the essential incapacity of men who do not know Christ for hearty faith in God." To such a conception, questioning of the historicity of Jesus were as fatal as to the old orthodoxy itself. Only when we occupy ground which allows no inward necessity for the assumption of an historical Jesus, can we discuss with any meaning whether the historical Jesus is indispensable to Christianity.

Troeltsch himself occupies this ground, and therefore admits that the indispensableness of Jesus to Christianity is to him a legitimate matter of debate. He holds very decided views, how-

ever, in the matter. Even on this ground he argues—and it is the chief purpose of his lecture to argue this—that Christianity cannot get along without Jesus. His argument is based on considerations derived from the history of religions and religious psychology, and amounts in general to the contention that religion is, after all said, a social affair and cannnot persist without cultus and communion; while these require a rallying-centre, which must be envisaged as real; and this rallying-centre in the present stage of culture cannot be anything but Jesus Christ. The persistence of even this type of religious belief hangs thus on the historicity of Jesus, and whenever, if ever (Troeltsch thinks they will never), the results of historical research shall prove unfavorable to the historicity of Jesus, then the death-knell of even this type of religious faith is sounded. This is, he assures us, the last word of social-psychological research in the realm of religion.[52]

The question thus defined and debated is, however, little more than an academic one. Troeltsch does not pretend that the extremely attenuated "Christianity" to which alone the question of the indispensableness of the historical Jesus has meaning, possesses vitality as a religion. Individuals may profess it and do profess it; he professes it himself; but the churches in which religious life is rich and powerful, are, he tells us, of a very different faith. We may be interested to know that even in this, its most attenuated form, "Christianity" cannot, in the opinion of one of our chief masters in the psychology and phenomenology of religion, dispense with Jesus. But the real question which presses for an answer is whether this very attenuated "Christianity," in which alone the question of the indispensableness of Jesus to Christianity can with any meaning be raised, possesses any just claim upon the name of Christianity. Its adherents are no doubt prompt in asserting their right to the name. But the allowance of their claim depends upon the prior question of what precisely Christianity is, and what kinds of "transformation" it can suffer without ceasing to be Christianity. If Christi-

[52] "In the central position of the personality of Jesus, Christianity does not possess a distinguishing peculiarity, separating it from all other religions, and for the first time making redemption possible, but only fulfils a general law of the spiritual life of man after a fashion peculiar to itself" (p. 42).

anity is only a particular way of conceiving God, with the emotional and volitional accompaniments and consequences of this way of conceiving God, then no doubt a particular way of conceiving God may claim to be Christianity,—that is, if it be the particular way of conceiving God which Christianity is. If Christianity, however, be anything more than just a way of conceiving God, it is hard to see what just claim a mere way of conceiving God can put in to the name.

We should not omit to note in passing that Troeltsch goes a step further than contending that Jesus is indispensable to Christianity even in that attenuated form of so-called Christianity to which he gives his adhesion. He contends that no other form of religion than this attenuated Christianity with Jesus enshrined at its centre can exist in the conditions of modern life. In a word, Jesus is to him indispensable to religion in the conditions of modern life. This is not, to be sure, quite the same as saying with Heinrich Weinel, that "after Jesus it is his religion or none." Troeltsch is not prepared to declare Christianity "the eternal religion," which can never be transcended. But he is prepared to insist that Christianity—of course, in the interpretation of Christianity which commends itself to him—is so bound up with, and gives such competent expression to, the religious side of the civilization of the Mediterranean basin, that so long as that civilization endures, so long must Christianity remain the only religion possible to civilized humanity. It is possible, of course, that the civilization of the Mediterranean basin may after a while be replaced by a still higher civilization; and then, no doubt, there will arise a new form of religious expression conformable to the new civilization. Christianity is thus not pronounced by Troeltsch the final, the absolute religion, but merely the only religion possible to the highest civilization as yet known to man. His defence of the indispensableness of Jesus means, then, only that we cannot in his opinion get along at present without Jesus.[53] After a

[53] Troeltsch's remarks in this connection provide a useful commentary upon the discussion in his Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Geschichte, 1902. The adherents of Christianity as of all other religions, he tells us there, live in a naïve belief in the absoluteness of their religion, due to failure to compare it with others and a natural estimate of their actual knowledge of the higher life as ultimate and unique. Christianity's claim to absoluteness is, no doubt, the most

while—who can tell?—as we advance beyond our present stage of culture, we may advance also beyond Christianity as a possible religion, and beyond the need of Jesus as the religious rallying-point of men.

The question of course springs at once into the mind whether, in thus representing Christianity as merely the natural and therefore necessary religion for the civilization of the Mediterranean basin, and Jesus as indispensable only for the religion belonging to that civilization,—which is not final but may pass away,—Troeltsch has not rendered this Christianity impossible as a religion for himself at least—if not for the Mediterranean basin—and thus emancipated himself from Jesus as the indispensable rallying-point of his religion. He himself certainly thus assumes a standpoint above the Christianity which he conceives as—at least possibly—only a stage in the journey of man towards the absolute religion, and he cannot possibly belong inwardly to its life-world. Can he, then, look to Jesus, the inspiring centre of this life-world, as really indispensable to his own faith? Must he not stand as much above the need of the inspiration of Jesus as he stands above the religious life which Jesus inspires, and so by his own definition exclude himself from the Christian name? [54] In any event, by his refusal to recognize the Christianity to which, he argues, Jesus is indispensable, as "the eter-

inwardly free and universal of all; and when Christianity has attained its new form, in which alone it appeals to modern man, it comes near to justification. Troeltsch can even say: "The claim itself"—i.e. to absoluteness—"has nowhere as yet been refuted or surmounted, and no imagination is capable of excogitating such a surmounting; and so it remains that no other foundation is laid for the soul's health of mankind except Jesus Christ" (p. 126). After a while, however, we here learn, it is possible that a new and better foundation may be laid. On the whole matter cf. C. W. Hodge, "The Finality of the Christian Religion," in Biblical and Theological Studies by the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1912, especially pp. 477 f.; also F. X. Kiefl, Der geschichtliche Christus und die moderne Philosophie, pp. 61–74.

[54] Otto Kirn, Glaube und Geschichte, 1900, pp. 31–32, speaking of the demand of faith for absoluteness, remarks: "A simply provisional revelation, a merely relative religious truth, an only probable reconciliation with God, and a purely conjectural assurance of salvation,—these are, not merely for a church, but for the religious nature, intolerable ideas. A religion which would see in Christ only a transition point of the religious development of mankind would have, even in an historical judgment, no right whatever to call itself Christian."

nal religion," Troeltsch certainly takes his place among those who deny that Jesus is indispensable to the religion, if not of today, yet of tomorrow.

Meanwhile why should the definition of the essence of Christianity be so vexed? Why should there be so much controversy over the application of the name? There surely ought to be little difficulty in determining what Christianity is. We need not disturb ourselves greatly about the debate which has been somewhat vigorously prosecuted as to whether its definition should be derived from its New Testament presentation or from its whole historical manifestation.[55] Impure as the development of Christianity has been, imperfect as has always been its manifestation, corrupt as has often been its expression, it has always presented itself to the world, as a whole, substantially under one unvarying form. Unquestionably, Christianity is a redemptive religion, having as its fundamental presupposition the fact of sin, felt both as guilt and as pollution, and offering as its central good, from which all other goods proceed, salvation from sin through an historical expiation wrought by the God-man Jesus Christ. The essence of Christianity has always been to its adherents the sinner's experience of reconciliation with God through the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. According to the Synoptic tradition Jesus himself represented himself as having come to seek and to save that which is lost, and described his salvation as a ransoming of many by the gift of his life, embodying this conception, moreover, in the ritual act which he commanded his disciples to perform in remembrance of him. Certainly his first followers with single-hearted unanimity proclaimed the great fact of redemption in the blood of Christ as the heart of their gospel: to them Jesus is the propitiation for sin, a sacrificial lamb without blemish, and all their message is summed up in the simple formula of "Jesus Christ and him as crucified." Nor has the church he founded ever drifted away from this fundamental point of view, as witness the central place of the mass in

[55] J. Weiss, Jesus von Nazareth, 1910, p. 7: "That the 'essence of Christianity' is to be found not merely in the New Testament, but in the entire fulness of its historical phenomena, there should today be no longer doubt." Cf. E. Vischer, Ist die Wahrheit des Christentums zu beweisen? 1902, p. 16.

the worship of its elder branches, and the formative place of justification by faith in Protestant life.[56] No doubt parties have from time to time arisen who have wished to construe Christianity otherwise. But they have always occupied a place on the periphery of the Christian movement, and have never constituted its main stream.

We can well understand that one swirling aside in an eddy and yet wishing to think of himself as travelling with the current—or even perhaps as breaking for it a new and better channel—should attempt to define Christianity so widely or so vaguely as to make it embrace him also. The attempt has never been and can never be successful. He is a Christian, in the sense of the founders of the Christian religion, and in the sense of its whole historical manifestation as a world-phenomenon, who, conscious of his sin, and smitten by a sense of the wrath of God impending over him, turns in faith to Jesus Christ as the propitiation for his sins, through whose blood and righteousness he may be made acceptable to God and be received into the number of those admitted to communion with him. If we demand the right to call ourselves Christians because it is by the teaching of Jesus that we have learned to know God as he really is, or because it is by his example that we have been led into a

[56] Emil Sulze may be adduced in passing as a witness to this fact. Writing on "Die notwendige Umgestaltung der evangelischen Glaubenslehre" (Protestantische Monatshefte, vol. xi, 1907, p. 250), he declares that "the greatest danger has been brought, as to the moral life so also to faith in God, by the circumstance that the old Protestantism held fast to the foundation-stone of Catholicism, to the doctrine of the substitutive satisfaction of Christ." He is deeply grieved, therefore, that the Protestant churches of Germany still sing:

> Mein Gewissen beisst mich nicht,
> Moses kann mich nicht verklagen.
> Der mich frei und ledig spricht,
> hat die Schulden abgetragen.

To make it truly "Christian," this verse, he declares, must be transformed into this:

> Klagt mich mein Gewissen an,
> lässt doch Gott mich nicht verzagen,
> stärkt mich auf der Leidensbahn,
> hilft mir Schuld und Strafe tragen.

The antipodal attitudes to redemption of the Old Protestantism and the "transformation" which would fain present itself as a New Protestantism could not be more vividly expressed.

life of faithful trust in God, or because it is by the inspiration of his "inner life," dimly discerned through the obscuring legends which have grown up about him, that we are quickened to a like religious hope and aspiration,—we are entering claims that have never been recognized and can never be recognized as valid by the main current of Christianity. Christianity as a world-movement is the body of those who have been redeemed from their sins by the blood of Jesus Christ, dying for them on the cross. The cross is its symbol; and in its heart sounds the great jubilation of the Apocalypse: "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

A Christianity without redemption—redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sin—is nothing less than a contradiction in terms.[57] Precisely what Christianity means is redemption in the blood of Jesus. No one need wonder therefore that, when redemption is no longer sought and found in Jesus, men should begin to ask whether there remains any real necessity for Jesus. We may fairly contend that the germ of christless Christianity is present wherever a proper doctrine of redemption has fallen away or even has only been permitted to pass out of sight. Of course in the meantime some other function than

[57] It is of course generally recognized that Christianity is in its essence a religion of redemption. See for example its exposition as such by Eucken, The Truth of Religion, Eng. trans., 1911, pp. 10 f., where Christianity is described as specifically the religion of redemption from sin. But, as Troeltsch expresses it, the idea of redemption has been "transformed" to suit modern notions. It often happens, therefore, that definitions of Christianity recognize the specific peculiarity of Christianity in words while evaporating it in meaning. Thus Schleiermacher (Glaubenslehre, § 11), describes Christianity as "a monotheistic form of faith belonging to the teleological tendency of piety, distinguished from other similar forms of faith essentially by this—that in it everything is referred to redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth." Here the wide genus to which Christianity is assigned is monotheistic religion, and the proximate genus, teleological (that is, ethical monotheistic) religion, while its differentia within this proximate genus is found in the fact that "in it everything is referred to redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth." If they could be read without reference to the special use of terms by their framers, definitions such as this might be taken as loose descriptions of what Christianity really is. They bear witness to the difficulty experienced by writers of a different point of view in escaping from accustomed terminology.

proper redemption may be found for Jesus. We are not insensible, for example, of the importance of the function assigned to him in, say, the Ritschlian theology; and we quite agree when Troeltsch urges that to the proper Ritschlians, therefore, Jesus is indispensable. But we cannot close our eyes to the artificiality of the Ritschlian construction, and we cannot put away the impression that the indispensable rôle assigned to Jesus, as it rests rather on inherited reverence for his person than on the logic of the system, is, in a word, only an interim-measure. Why should an influence from Jesus be needed to awake man to faith-knowledge? And how could such a creative influence be exerted by a personality so slightly known, or an "inner life" so vaguely discerned through the mists of time? Herrmann, for example, expressly denies that there is any direct communion of the believer with the exalted Christ; everything is mediated through the "community." All this, therefore, will easily fall away and the actual influence which begets faith be assigned, as Otto Ritschl, for instance, does assign it, to the "community,"[58] while to Jesus there is left little more than the rôle of first Christian. And so soon as Jesus becomes merely the first Christian, he at once, as Macintosh justly urges,[59] ceases to be indispensable

[58] Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, vol. iii, 1893, p. 388. In the number of the Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche for July, 1912 (pp. 244–268), which has come to hand since this article was sent to the printer, Wilhelm Fresenius subjects Troeltsch's Lecture to a detailed criticism from the Ritschlian standpoint and in the name of the Ritschlians repudiates the representation that the historicity of Jesus is indispensable to faith. Ritschlians mean only, it seems, that they themselves find in Jesus what they need for faith: they do not mean that others may not attain faith by some other way (p. 250). With them "faith rests not on 'historischen' but on 'geschichtlichen' facts," that is to say, on genuine "life-experiences"; and (p. 262) "accordingly faith can look quietly on while criticism does its work, and openly accept its results: it could even endure that the unhistoricity of Jesus should be proved—a thing which, to be sure, has not been done and which sober historical criticism, moreover, will scarcely maintain is likely to be done in the future,—but in principle this case would not turn the scale for faith, that is, so long as faith remains conscious that it is of historical (geschichtlichen) nature and the historical (geschichtliche) fact on which it bases itself ultimately, can be neither established nor refuted by historical (historischen) science. According to Fresenius, therefore, it is a matter of indifference to Ritschlians whether there ever was any "historical Jesus" or not: it is only necessary that they should have had a genuine "experience." This is a full-fledged "christless Christianity."

[59] American Journal of Theology, vol. xvi, January, 1912, p. 110.

for subsequent Christians. Why should not they, as well as he, rise out of the void? He may be the first of the series: that is an accident. Being the first of the series he may have set an example which works powerfully through all subsequent time; he may even have left precepts and directions which smooth the path of all who would adventure the Christian walk with him; above all he may have by his "inner life" of perfect trust in his Father become an inspiration which throbs down all the years. He may, in other words, be exceedingly useful. But indispensable? To be indispensable he must be something more than a teacher, an example, an inspiration. He must be a creator. And to be a creator, he must be and do something far more than the first Christian, living in realization of the fatherhood of God. Whenever Jesus is reduced in his person or work to the level of his "followers," his indispensableness is already in principle subverted and the seeds of a christless Christianity are planted.

The application of this principle will, no doubt, carry us far. When Auguste Sabatier, for example, tells us[60] that the whole of Christianity is summed up in the parables of the prodigal son and of the publican, he is intent only on abolishing from Christianity the idea of satisfaction. But does he not by necessary consequence with it abolish also Jesus himself, so far as his indispensableness to the Christian religion is concerned? In point of fact, these parables have a Jesus in them as little as a satisfaction. Sabatier very naturally teaches us, therefore, that there is no uniqueness in Christ's work, nothing in it "isolated and incomprehensible." "The sufferings and death of the righteous and the good operate in the same way as the passion of Christ upon the conscience of the wicked"; "all God's servants" have stood by the side of Jesus as, along with him and in the same sense (though not in the same degree), our saviours. We need not, however, journey so far from home for an example. When Horace Bushnell expends the first Part of his *Vicarious Sacrifice* in proving that there is "nothing superlative in vicarious sacrifice, or above the universal principles of right and duty,"

[60] The Doctrine of the Atonement, and its Historical Evolution, Eng. trans., 1904, pp. 123, 133. Cf. also the review of the book in the Princeton Theological Review, vol. iii, 1905, pp. 508–509.

that in what Christ did, he did "neither more nor less than what the common standard of holiness and right requires," and what was "no way peculiar to him, save in degree," he has already thrown the door wide open for a christless Christianity.[61] He may himself be preoccupied in vindicating to Jesus some kind of uniqueness, if not in the nature, yet in the effect of his work. But this is not intrinsic to the system, and easily falls away. The assimilation of Christ to his followers in the nature of his work and the kind of effect wrought by it is logically fatal to his indispensableness to the religion of which he is still thought of as the founder.

There are other forms of teaching, also, that have enjoyed great vogue, in which the indispensableness of Jesus is, to say the least, not explicit. One such, oddly enough, finds incidental expression in a criticism by Shailer Mathews of Macintosh's separation of Christianity from Christ.[62] Mathews very properly questions whether the issue raised by Macintosh's reasoning "does not really involve the momentous question as to whether we are not in the process of evolving a new phase of religion from historic Christianity"; and as properly remarks that the retention of the name Christianity for "what we regard as ideal," even though it is not historically traceable to Jesus or to Paul, "would not be the first time that the effort has been made to submerge New Testament teaching in general culture, and in much the same fashion of substituting dehistoricalized, speculative systems for a Christianity with historical content." He expresses hearty agreement with Macintosh, however, in one thing. It is this: that "saving faith, in the personal religious sense, does not wait upon the verdict of the higher criticism as to the historicity of Jesus." Why? Because, apart from the higher criticism, that is, apart from all scientific scrutiny of the

[61] Cf. especially Vicarious Sacrifice, New York, 1866, p. 107, and 2d ed., vol. i, New York, 1877, p. 107.

[62] American Journal of Theology, vol. xv, October, 1911, pp. 614–617. For an uncompromising assertion of the point of view here intimated by Mathews see J. Warschauer, Jesus: Seven Questions, 1908, pp. 206–233; "Is Belief in Him Necessary?" Warschauer has no hesitation in declaring that "there is no room in a civilized theology for a doctrine which would limit salvation to those professing any one form of religious belief" (p. 230).

gospel records, there is reason enough for trusting our all to Jesus? No. Because Jesus is not necessary to "saving faith, in the personal religious sense"! "Men are not saved by mere orthodoxy or heterodoxy," Mathews remarks,—inconsequently, since nobody ever supposed they were. But then he adds positively: "In the sense that their wills are one with God's, men who have never heard of Jesus have been and are to be saved."

The doctrine here enunciated is practically the doctrine which has played a large part in theological controversy—witness the "Andover debate" of a quarter of a century ago—under the name of the "essential Christ." According to it, men can exercise "saving faith" without any knowledge of Christ; that is to say, as Mathews suggests, their "religious faith, however imperfect," may "possess a quality" that makes them "one with those who through the clearer revelation and deeper certainty given by Jesus also trust God as fatherly and so partake of the divine spirit." In this very prevalent doctrine, there is obviously a very express preparation for a christless Christianity. In the form given it by Mathews it has indeed already fairly passed over into christless Christianity. He conceives the function of Jesus to be to induce trust in God as fatherly; and he conceives that men can exercise and do exercise a faith which has this "quality," apart from any action upon them by Jesus. This is already the announcement that Jesus may be dispensed with—all that he is and all that he does—for some. Some attain saving faith without Jesus; some—no doubt, more easily—with him.[63] More

[63] This is not nowadays a rare point of view. Emil Sulze, for example, who is very much afraid the honor due to God shall be accorded to Jesus, gives repeated expression to it. Paul Mehlhorn (Protestantische Monatshefte, vol. v, 1901, p. 190) describes Sulze's view, with references to his Wie ist der Kampf um die Bedeutung der Person und des Wirkens Jesu zu beendigen? 1901, as follows: "Although now Sulze emphasizes that faith is an immediate work of God in us, so that there are circumstances in which it can arise without the mediation of acquaintance with Christ and the church, yet it would be in his view a terrible loss for the individual if he did not permit himself to be helped forward and given assurance in this matter by history and its pioneering personalities. Just as a German statesman 'who had not formed himself on Stein and Bismarck must remain a pitiable beginner' (p. 34), so for the clarifying and establishment of our faith, 'the person of every child of God' is 'for us a means of grace in God's

commonly a higher function is attributed to Jesus. He has, it is said, made atonement for sin; on the basis of this atonement men may be saved. He has shed down his Spirit, quickening faith in men; their faith, therefore, though exercised in ignorance of him, has its warrant, and its source, and its effect from him. Their salvation is accordingly from Christ, and by Christ, and in Christ, though they are ignorant of all this. In proportion as this higher doctrine is approached, in that proportion is the preparation made for a christless Christianity less explicit. But even in it, there is an implicit preparation for it. A Christ of whom you are unconscious is at best in some sense a Christ who does not exist for you: and if everything he may be for you depends upon your consciousness of him, a Christ of whom you are unconscious does not exist at all for you. A salvation apart from knowledge of Christ is always liable to be conceived as a salvation apart from Christ. In Mathews's construction, though he is in the act of repelling a christless Christianity, it actually becomes salvation without Christ. He speaks of it only with reference to some. But if some may thus be saved without Christ, why not all? There seems no compelling reason, on Mathews's ground, why Jesus should be proclaimed, or why he should exist, at all.

We may learn from Otto Ritschl [64] that a very similar line of thought may be developed on Ritschlian premises. Ritschl is examining W. Herrmann's doctrine of faith. According to Herrmann, man finds the living God not within himself, where mysticism bids him seek him, but solely in the personal life of Jesus.

hand,' while Christ is and abides 'by his unique vocation . . . the perfectly unique means of grace for us' (p. 35)."

Sulze, however, is more hospitable to the idea of the independence of "Christian" faith of Christ than Mathews. Neither complete peace nor complete assurance can be had, he urges, without a free attitude towards Jesus himself. And quite after the manner of Macintosh, he argues: "And is the attitude to God which is here described not the same as that which, according to all that we know of him, was occupied by Christ himself? He did not win love to his Father in Heaven in dependence on an historical person. God himself gave him what he revealed by him" (Protestantische Monatshefte, vol. xi, 1907, p. 247). His views as to the dispensability of Jesus are more or less clearly expressed in a number of articles in the Protestantische Monatshefte.

[64] Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche, vol. iii, 1893, pp. 380–388.

Christian faith is thus made to carry with it "a clear consciousness of its conditioning through the personal life of Jesus." This, Ritschl thinks, is too narrow a view.

> What [he asks] are we to hold respecting such Christians as lack a clear consciousness of the inner possessions for which they are indebted to Christ? Or is it also deficiency in complete faith when a Christian in prayer to his God and Father seeks and finds firm support in the cares and tasks and strifes of life, without at the same time recalling Christ as the sole revelation of this God; although he has failed in this perhaps only because he lacked the spiritual energy to grasp the religious conception of God and that of Christ in one and the same prayer-idea? Can we doubt that such Christians have faith in the full sense, because the theoretical consideration leads to conceiving Christian faith in general not apart from a clear consciousness of its conditioning through Christ's personal life?

It is plain fact, he urges, that the fruits of faith are reaped where this clear consciousness is not present; and it is equally plain fact that this clear consciousness can be present and no fruits of faith show themselves: the question obtrudes itself "whether the conscious but unfruitful or the fruitful but unconscious faith is the more valuable." Clear consciousness must obviously be looked upon as only occasional, as "a special charism"; some have it, in others it is "latent or undeveloped."

> Wherever world-overcoming faith, recognizable in its fruits, is found, it must be referred back to the influence of Christ, whether the believing subject is conscious of this connection or not. On the other hand, it should be recognized, in opposition to Herrmann, that the faith which does not bring with it a clear consciousness of its conditioning through Christ, but which nevertheless is actually conditioned through Christ's operations, is only mediately grounded on the personal life of Jesus. Immediately, however, the ground of such faith is the Christian life practised in the sense of Christ in the community. And only in this also do the vital activities of Christ propagate themselves from generation to generation.

Jesus may have been needed, then, to set the course of Christian life going in the world. After that he may safely be forgotten. There is no obvious reason why he may not be forgotten by the whole Christian community,—why the memory of him may

not fade entirely out of the world,—and still faith be continued through the influence of the faith-exercising community; just as motion once induced in the first of a series of balls in contact with one another may be transmitted to the last ball, though it is touched actually only by the penultimate one. A fully developed christless Christianity may thus grow out of Christ himself; if you will only permit us to think of Christ as providing merely the initial impulse and then withdrawing out of sight.

It has been thought worth while to bring into view these remoter tendencies of thought making towards christless Christianity, that the numerous pathways may be kept in mind along which men may travel, from depreciation of the function of Christ in "redemption," through neglect or forgetfulness of him, to actual denial of his indispensable place in the religious life of Christians. These pathways, while very direct, are also no doubt often somewhat long. That is to say, the passage from unconscious to conscious disregard of Christ is made logically much more quickly than it is practically. From the practical point of view the distance that separates the conscious from the merely virtual denial of the indispensableness of Jesus to faith is beyond doubt immense. The phenomenon which now faces us is that this immense space has been actually overstepped by many about us. There are many still calling themselves Christians who have come to the pass that, not inadvertently or by way of logical implication merely, but in the most heedful manner in the world, and by express declaration, they turn away from Jesus as no longer possessing supreme significance for their religious life. They deliberately pronounce him unnecessary for their faith, and seek its source and ground and content elsewhere. No doubt, they exhibit differences among themselves. George B. Foster, who surely ought to know, distinguishes two varieties.

> To-day [he says][65] there are two kinds of spirits which dream of a Christianity without Christ: the weak and the strong. The weak are those who have received all the priceless blessings which we possess in Christianity, only at third or fourth hand. They have been refreshed, nourished, led by these blessings—whence they came is of little concern to them. . . . The others are the strong.

[65] The Finality of the Christian Religion, 2d ed., 1909, p. 331.

> They know very well that Christianity sprang from Christ. But one does not now need him longer. Were they to be quite frank, they would say that he, not entirely unlike miracles, had come to be something of a hindrance. But would it not poorly serve the advancement of Christianity [he adds], the pervasion of the world with Christianity, and one's own peace and joy in Christianity, to drain off the fountain? Is not their view much the same as if we were to sever the connection of our arteries with the heart whence the blood comes?

The criticism is apt, from the Christian point of view: apt, though not quite adequate. From the Christian point of view it may very properly be said (though this is far from all that needs to be said) that those who are advising us that Christianity can get along very well without Christ are very much like men sitting by a brookside and reasoning that since we have the brook we do not need the spring from which it flows, and may readily admit the doubt whether there is a spring. If even this criticism does not seem valid to our christless Christians, that can only be because they no longer occupy the Christian point of view.

The point which needs particular pressing lies, indeed, just here,—that in thus separating themselves from Jesus as the source and ground and content of their faith, they sever themselves from Christianity and proclaim themselves of another religion. By some odd tangle of thought they may still declare themselves Christians, though they no longer hold to Christ or look to him for redemption from their sins. They have learned, we are told, from David Friedrich Strauss (in his Christian period) to distinguish between the principle of Christianity and the person of Christ. The discovery of this distinction was, we know, with Strauss "the first step which counts" towards we know what end. May we not commend to those who follow him in this first step the example which he set them when he opened his eyes at last and saw whither it really had conducted him?

> Therefore, my conviction is [he writes] that, if we are not dealing in evasion, if we do not wish to tack and trim, if we do not desire to say Yea, yea, and Nay, nay,—in short, if we speak like honest and candid men, we must confess that we are no longer Christians.[66]

[66] Der alte und der neue Glaube, 1872, p. 90; cf. p. 143.

Why should there be any hesitation in the matter? A Christianity to which Christ is indifferent is, as a mere matter of fact, no Christianity at all. For Christianity, in the core of the matter, consists in just, "Jesus Christ and Him as crucified." Can he be of the body who no longer holds to the Head?

What is, after all, the fundamental difference between Christianity and other "positive" religions? Does it not turn just on this—that the founders of the other religions point out the way to God while Christ presents Himself as that Way? It is primary teaching that we receive, when we are told:

> Buddha and Confucius, Zarathustra and Mohammed are no doubt the first confessors of the religions which have been founded by them, but they are not the content of these religions, and they stand in an external and to a certain extent accidental relation to them. Their religions could remain the same even though their names were forgotten, or their persons replaced by others. In Christianity, however, it is altogether different. To be sure the notion is occasionally given expression that Christ too does not desire to be the only mediator and He would be quite content that His name should be forgotten, if only His principles and spirit lived on in the community. But others who for themselves have wholly broken with Christianity have in an unpartisan fashion denied and refuted these notions. Christianity stands to the person of Christ in a wholly different relation from that of the religions of the peoples to the persons by whom they have been founded. Jesus is not the first confessor of the religion which bears His name. He was not the first and most eminent Christian, but He holds in Christianity a wholly different place. . . . Christ is Christianity itself; He stands not outside of it but in its centre; without His name, person and work, there is no Christianity left. In a word, Christ does not point out the way to salvation; He is the Way itself.[67]

[67] Herman Bavinck, Magnalia Dei, 1909, p. 312.

MOHAMMED AND THE ISLAM OF THE KORAN

CRAWFORD H. TOY

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

It is reckoned that Islam is now professed by from 150 to 200 million people, nearly one-seventh of the population of the globe. For thirteen centuries it has played a great rôle in the history of religion. Its adherents have been found among civilized, half-civilized, and barbarous peoples; its theory and its practice have traversed the whole gamut of religious thought and experience; it has sometimes been associated with the leadership of thought in Western Asia, Egypt, and Europe; and it has maintained its position against the assaults and seductions of neighboring faiths. It presents an interesting and perplexing problem to students of religion, of anthropology and psychology, and of the general history of civilization. Recent events have raised afresh the question of its achievements in the past and its possibilities for the future, and writers of various points of view and various degrees of knowledge and insight have discussed its genesis and its essential nature and the character of its founder.[1] It is the object of this article to state some of the questions thus raised and to examine briefly some of the answers that have been offered.

I. MOHAMMED

Trustworthy material for the life of Mohammed, particularly up to the flight to Medina, is scanty. The only contemporaneous guide is the Koran, and the Koran, devoted, as it is, to the proclamation of dogmas and the organization of the young community of believers, has little occasion to give biographical details, which, moreover, were well known to his hearers and needed no mention. If we call in tradition to supplement the Koran, we find that this is an uncertain guide. The earliest Moslem biog-

[1] A list of some useful works on Mohammed and Islam is given at the end of this article.

raphers of Mohammed wrote long after his death, and the character of their works (in the form in which they have come down to us) is not such as to strengthen our confidence in the exactness of their information.[2] It is true that tradition (*ḥadith*) concerning the prophet was gradually organized into what purported to be an exact science. It was required that any saying attributed to him should be traced back through a line of credible reporters to some member of his family or to some person who was intimately associated with him. But we know little of the credibility of the intermediaries, and we have abundant evidence of the rapidity with which legend gathered about the person of the founder of the faith. The great traditionist Bokhari (810–870) brought back from an extended tour 600,000 traditions, out of which he selected and published 7275 as in his opinion authentic. When we consider the amount of impossible matter contained in Ibn Isḥaq's biography of the prophet, we can hardly doubt that the mass of the later collections is of the same sort. It is possible that these contain some genuine reports of Mohammed's sayings and doings, but we have no certain means of distinguishing them; a critic's judgment of a tradition will be determined by his opinion concerning its consonance with the Koran or with some other authority held to be trustworthy, and in this procedure there is abundant room for coloring by individual feeling and points of view. Yet we are not left wholly without means of arriving at the facts of Mohammed's life. The uncertainties of the tradition pertain largely to dogmas and embellishments. What a man does under the public eye, particularly when he occupies a prominent position, may impress itself on the memory of contemporaries and be handed down with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and the general course of such a man's life may be fairly well known.

Mohammed was born in Mecca about the year 570 of our era. As there was no exact chronological system in Arabia at that time, the date of the event has to be reckoned from general indications. The tradition was that the year of his birth was that

[2] Ibn Isḥaq, the earliest biographer, died in the year 768; his work is lost, but a great part of it is preserved in a compilation by Ibn Hisham, who died in 834. Ibn Sa'd, the secretary of Al-Waqidi, died in 845; his biography is presumably based on the materials left by his famous master.

of the expedition of the South-Arabian Christian king Abraha against Mecca; this expedition is mentioned in the Koran (Sura 105), was a well-known and notable event, and would be a decisive chronological guide if we knew its date, but this we do not know. However, accepting the tradition that he was about forty years of age when he came forward as prophet, and fifty-one or fifty-two when he left Mecca for Medina (in 622),[3] we arrive at the year 571 or 570 for his birth. He was of the Hashimite clan—it was the Hashimites that stood by him, on the ground of kinship, in the time of his greatest trial in Mecca. Exactly what the social position of this clan was is not clear; its attitude in the Meccan period of the prophet's life was not that of an influential body—its men were brave and faithful enough, but could not hold their own, except by passive endurance, against the leaders of the dominant Koreish. That Mohammed early lost his parents appears from Koran 93 6: "Did not he [thy Lord] find thee an orphan and provide thee shelter?" He was cared for first by his grandfather and then by his uncle, Abu Talib. As the latter was a trader, according to the Meccan custom, the young man took part in commercial journeys to Syria and southern Arabia, and when he was about twenty-five years old entered the service of the rich widow Ḫadijah (Khadijah) as commercial agent. This turned out to be an important step for him—he married his patroness, and, though she is said to have been fifteen years his senior, the marriage proved to be a happy one; during her lifetime he took no other wife. For the next fifteen years we have no details, but it was doubtless a period of reflection. Mecca, the commercial, literary, and religious centre of northern Arabia, was a meeting-place for men of various views, and the young man, relieved by his marriage from pecuniary cares and enjoying an assured social position, could not fail to come in contact with the ideas that Jews, Christians, and Persians represented. Gradually, by processes of thought that are not recorded, when he was about forty years old, he reached the conclusion that one God alone was to be worshipped, and, not content with holding this belief for himself, he felt impelled to preach it to his fellow-townsmen as

[3] This date may be regarded as fairly well fixed.

a prophet of Allah, the successor of the great prophets of the past.

He spoke of his conviction first to his intimates, his wife, his cousin Ali (son of Abu Talib), and his freedman and adopted son Zeid. Encouraged by them he came forward publicly as a religious teacher claiming to be sent by Allah. He addressed himself first to individual men, and then boldly to groups of men. The Kaaba was the Meccan general place of meeting; hither came men from all quarters to pray (the Kaaba housed the gods of many tribes), and here the notables used to assemble and discuss the affairs of the city. Mohammed, going with the others to perform his devotions, took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him of approaching the chief men of the Koreish. He denounced the worship of the local gods, and proclaimed resurrection and final judgment, with paradise for those who accepted his doctrine, and gehenna for all others.

Now began a time of stress and strain for him and for Mecca. He deliberately and sharply set himself in antagonism to all the conservative elements of the people—to the popular attachment to the inherited religion, to the commercial interests which feared that rejection of the gods would alienate the surrounding tribes and imperil the trade of the city, and to the pride of the Koreish aristocracy, which resented the intrusion of a doctrine that threatened its prestige and its power. It was, in fact, nothing less than a social revolution that Mohammed proposed, the overthrow of present standards of honor and influence and the elevation to primacy of a man who did not represent the existing tribal authority. The boldness, not to say audacity, of his demand compels surprise and admiration. Naturally his speeches finally set the city on an uproar. At first, however, the opposition to him was quiet. He had few followers; the body of the citizens were against him, and they contented themselves with ridicule or contemptuous denial of his assertions. The Koran abounds in references to the charges brought against him. He was sneered at as crazy (81 22), as a soothsayer (52 29), or a magician inspired by a cursed satan (81 25), and as a poet (52 30, 37 35)—he was, in a word, described as a crazy or fanciful person, unworthy of serious consideration by a sensible man. The inclusion

of "poet" in the same category with "madman" and "soothsayer" is due probably not merely to the passionate element in poetry and the ravings of some who set themselves up as poets, but also to the fact that in Arabic a poet is a "knower," as the soothsayer also was endowed with knowledge, and both were anciently supposed to be inspired by some supernatural being.[4] Mohammed's earlier utterances resembled poetry in that they consisted of short phrases, passionate ejaculations; otherwise no man was ever more innocent of poetry than he, as his keen critics doubtless knew (for in that day the form of Arabic poetry was strictly regulated, and his discourses did not follow the rules), but they chose to ridicule what they called his wildness.[5] To all such scoffs he replied by positive denial, and indeed they were sufficiently answered by his preceding record and by his present procedure, which gave evidence of sanity and seriousness.

A more important attack on his claim to divine inspiration was the charge of pretence and falsification. His discourses, it was said, offered nothing new, they were only copies of old stories (68 15), which he caused to be written down morning and evening and then gave out as revelations from Allah (25 6 ff.); or, more definitely, it was alleged that they were taught him by a certain man (16 105), and he was, therefore, an utterer of falsehoods and an impostor. What man is here referred to as his teacher is not known; he was, presumably, a Jew or a Christian, and it may be assumed that Mohammed got narrative material, from time to time, from such sources. But he stoutly denied that he was dependent on men. If, said he, my accusers wish to sustain their assertion that my Koran is of human origin, let them bring something like it (52 33)—an effective argument, for no Arab could have produced anything like it in religious distinctness and elevation; and as to foreign aid he observed that a foreigner would have spoken in a foreign tongue, whereas the Koran was pure Arabic (16 105)[6]—a futile observation, for in any case he himself must have employed the Arabic language.

[4] Poetry and poets were, however, highly regarded, especially by the desert tribes, among whom were not a few men of poetical genius.

[5] And he, in his turn, hated the poets (26 224 f.).

[6] His insistence on this point constituted an appeal to the national feeling of his audience.

In addition to these attacks on Mohammed's sanity and truthfulness the Meccan critics objected to the manner in which his message, which he claimed to be divine, was said to be revealed, and to its doctrinal content. They took exception to the absence of visible supernatural features. What sort of apostle, said they, is this? he eats food and walks about in the streets like one of us—he should be accompanied by an angel as fellow-preacher, and should have treasure and a garden to supply food and other needs (25 8 f.); or at least some great man in Mecca or in Tayif should have been chosen as Allah's messenger (43 30). It was also shrewdly observed that the Koran, if it came from Allah, should have been sent down at once entire and not piecemeal, as, according to Mohammed, was the case (25 34)—for, they held, why should a divine message be given in driblets? He seems to have felt the force of this objection, for about this time he received an admonition from Allah not to be hasty in demanding revelations (20 113). He might have replied that it was thus the old Jewish prophets received their messages, a word for every situation as it arose; but it is doubtful whether he knew this fact, and whether such an explanation would have satisfied the Meccans. As to his teaching, a bodily resurrection seemed to them absurd. We live and we die, they said; death is the end, time alone destroys us, and we shall not live again; if there be a resuscitation, bring our fathers back to life (44 33 ff., 45 23 f.). In defence of the popular religion it was urged, besides the appeal to the custom of the fathers, that Allah could have prevented the worship of the gods if he had desired to do so (43 19–21). To these arguments Mohammed replied that Allah chose his messengers (as, for instance, an Arab of Mecca) and sent his messages as seemed to him good; that he was all-powerful, and, as he had originally given life, could give it again after death; and that, having formerly permitted the religion of the fathers, he now sent something better.

The tradition has stories of persecution—the adherents of the new faith, it is said, were insulted, a few slaves among them were cruelly treated.[7] In the Koran (86 *al.*) there is mention

[7] One of these slaves was the Abessinian black, Bilal, who was afterwards the first *muezzin;* he was bought and freed by Abu Bekr in Mecca.

of plots, but no details are given. It does not appear that Mohammed's life was ever in danger; he was protected from extreme violence by his kinsfolk.[8] But as time went on and there was no sign that he would cease preaching, he became more and more obnoxious to the Koreish leaders. Probably their objection to him was rather political than religious; religious convictions sat lightly on the Arabs of that day, but the new doctrine was a menace to the power of the aristocracy. It was determined to adopt rigorous measures. First, however, a delegation went to Abu Talib with the request that he would dissuade his nephew from proceeding farther. Abu Talib's appeal was in vain; Mohammed remained firm, and the ties of blood held the Hashimites with him. The next step was more serious—the Hashimite clan was put under the ban, intermarrying and trading with it were forbidden the Meccans. The banned families retired to an outlying quarter of the city and there remained three years, suffering from scarcity of food; then the situation excited the pity and the indignation of some persons of influence, and the ban was removed. But the prospect of success for Mohammed and his teaching in Mecca was small, and he was forced to consider the possibility of establishing himself elsewhere. Some years before this, groups of his followers had gone over to Abyssinia, but had returned without accomplishing anything. He now bethought him of Tayif, a prosperous city lying about sixty miles east of Mecca; but his proposals were rejected by the people with scorn. It seemed as if his mission was a failure—he had made no marked impression on his native city.[9] There is no indication that the thought of surrender ever occurred to him; the Meccan suras maintain their unyielding tone to the last, but he must have been profoundly depressed. He seems, however, not to have abandoned his conviction of ultimate victory (though of his inner life we have regrettably few details), and he was a man of resource.

At the moment when things were at their worst help came from an unexpected quarter. Falling into conversation, at the season

[8] There is a vague reference to a murderous plot in the Koran (8 29).

[9] About this time also (619) death deprived him of two stanch friends, his wife and his uncle Abu Talib.

of the pilgrimage, with some men of Yathreb, he so impressed them that they agreed to present his claims to their fellow-townsmen. A year later (621) they returned with a favorable report and a definite invitation, leading men of the two Arab tribes of Yathreb (Aus and Khazraj) pledging their faith and promising obedience to him in all things. Still another year elapsed before the preparations for departure were completed. His followers had been withdrawing in small groups, and in June, 622,[10] he himself, accompanied by Abu Bekr, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Koreish (who had got information of his purpose and wished to detain him), and reached in safety his new home, where he was received with enthusiasm. Henceforward it was known as Medina, "the city (*medina*) of the prophet." This sudden acceptance of Mohammed by Yathreb (in sharp contrast with the attitude of Mecca) appears to have been induced by a combination of conditions. The Yathrebites had long been in contact with certain Jewish tribes settled in their vicinity, and the doctrine of one only God could not have been strange to them; they had no such powerful conservative aristocracy as ruled in Mecca, and their city was not a great religious centre; the two cities were commercial rivals, and they of Yathreb were, doubtless, not indifferent to the honor of carrying off a prophet[11] from their Meccan brethren. However the upturning of opinion came about, it proved to be real and of high significance.

Installed in Medina, Mohammed of necessity changed his tone —he became dictator as well as preacher. After establishing public worship he turned his attention to strengthening his political position. The situation was not without dangers. The Koreish were his implacable enemies, and were superior to him in military force; the desert tribes were of uncertain disposition except in their love of plunder; the Jews formed practically independent, well-guarded communities, and had to be reckoned with; and in the city, while Khazraj was friendly, there were not a few men in Aus who yielded only a grudging obedience to the new

[10] This is the date of the *hijra* (*hejĭra*), the Mohammedan chronological epoch.

[11] They must have heard much of prophets from their Jewish neighbors, perhaps a prediction of an expected prophet who would do great things; and here was a prophet of their own nation!

government, and withheld support from it whenever they could do so without coming to open conflict.[12] These antagonistic conditions Mohammed met, on the whole, with skill. It was necessary to provide support for the Emigrants, the Companions of the prophet, who had left everything in Mecca to follow him, and were now largely dependent on the hospitality of the Medinan converts (the "Helpers"); this he attempted to do by attacking Meccan trading caravans. The first successful foray was made by a party of his followers in the sacred month Rajab (623), in which war was forbidden—a grievous offence against law; Mohammed was displeased, but condoned and in a measure justified the act (2 214). The next year an attack on the Meccan caravan returning from Syria brought about the first conflict with the Koreish (battle of Bedr), a Moslem victory that greatly strengthened Mohammed's position in Medina (8 9, 17, 42). A defeat at Ohod (625) was explained as a test, and final victory was promised (3 117, 145). On the other hand, a formidable Meccan attack (627) was repelled by means of an intrenchment (battle of the ditch), and this ended the war with Mecca. Meantime a certain number of the desert tribes had been won over, and the increasing power of Medina made it less and less difficult to secure the aid of the bedawin. The Jews were gradually disposed of. They made the mistake of underestimating Mohammed's strength and, in one case, of allying themselves with his enemies; occasions of quarrel arose, and the result was that two of the three tribes, Kainuka and Nadir, were banished (625), and the third, Kuraiza, was annihilated (627)[13]. The disaffected in Medina were now overawed and unable to give trouble. The remaining years of Mohammed's life witnessed some military reverses, but a general advance in power. In 629 he was permitted by the Koreish to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the following year the city fell into his hands without a blow. The idols were demolished, the Moslem worship was established, and he found himself political and religious master of Arabia. He took measures to organize and consolidate his government, made his farewell pilgrimage, and died

[12] These are the "hypocrites" so vehemently denounced in the Koran: they probably regarded themselves as patriots.

[13] See Suras 59 and 33.

two months later (June, 632), having seen his dream of victory gloriously realized.

As we are dependent for our knowledge of Mohammed's character mainly on the Koran, it is fortunate that we are able to fix the relative chronology of its parts with a fair degree of probability. Of the 114 suras, or chapters, the tradition assigns somewhat over four-fifths (comprising about three-fourths of the book) to the Meccan period, and within this period a division, based on the tone and material of the contents, into earlier and later suras may be made. In general the shorter and more rhapsodical suras are to be regarded as the earlier; as time went on, the prophet's discourses became more methodical, and in Medina he was naturally led to introduce much legislative material. No absolute chronological certainty is attainable, but the reader, whether he has the original or a translation, cannot fail to feel differences in the suras, and the headings "of Mecca," "of Medina," may be taken as a good general guide. The hints in the Koran may be supplemented, as is remarked above, by some statements of the tradition.

We get the impression that Mohammed's personality was an attractive one. He had the devoted attachment not only of his immediate family but also of strong and thoughtful men like his uncle Abu Talib,[14] Abu Bekr, and Omar, and many others, and the hostility of the Koreish was due not to his character but to his preaching. His bearing under persecution was generally dignified. The remarkable confidence that he inspired in his followers was probably based in part on belief in the sanity and solidity of his character. There are indications of tenderness also in his relations with his friends and with children. He seems to have been physically brave, as was natural in a man of his place and time—he bore his share in the battles with the Koreish. He showed moral bravery also in the stanchness with which he proclaimed and maintained unpopular opinions in Mecca. The story that, to conciliate the Koreish, he publicly admitted that the three goddesses, Al-Lāt, Al-Uzza, and Manāt, were intercessors with Allah, and that repenting he publicly took back his admission,

[14] Two of his uncles took a different attitude: Abbas long stood aloof from him, and Abu Lahab was his bitter enemy.

appears not to be authenticated. It may have originated as a legendary explanation of his positive declaration (53 19 ff.) that the three were mere names and that their worship was unauthorized by Allah. But if he publicly admitted his error and revoked his concession, it was a brave act. The theory of some late commentators that he did really make this admission, by suggestion of Satan, when he was out of himself and did not know what he was saying, is probably a mythical attachment to the affirmation (22 51) that there has been no apostle or prophet but Satan has approached him with wicked suggestions.

That he was of an excitable and passionate nature is evident from his violent outbursts against his enemies. His denunciations of the Koreish may perhaps be excused as condemnation of religious error and of antagonism to God; he is not behind them in exuberance and sharpness of invective—for every charge of craziness or falsity he has a countercharge of blindness or treachery and a threat of hell-fire.[15] His attitude toward his uncle Abu Lahab also may be regarded as religious hatred, but it was in part hatred of a personal enemy, not merely condemnation of a wrong opinion. The concentrated bitterness of Sura 111 is offensive: "May the hands of Abu Lahab and he himself perish! His riches shall not profit him. He shall be cast into flaming fire [*lahab* is "flame"], and with him his wife, bearing wood, a cord about her neck." It belongs to his nervous excitability that he had visions which he did not distinguish from real events. He mentions, briefly in a single sentence (17 1), the night-journey from the temple of Mecca to the temple of Jerusalem in the same tone in which he speaks of himself as an orphan cared for by Allah (93 6).[16] Twice (53 5–18) he saw the mighty one (probably Gabriel)[17] who was Allah's agent of revelation to him, once on the horizon, once at the lotus tree near the garden of the (divine)

[15] A prophet, identifying his opinion with the will of God, must necessarily be implacable toward religious opponents; compare Ezekiel's anathema against Zedekiah (Ezek. 17 11 ff.), whom he regarded as an enemy of Yahweh, and early Christian anathemas against heretics.

[16] This incident, referred to very simply by Mohammed, is enormously expanded in the tradition (Weil's translation of Ibn Isḥaq, pp. 200 ff.).

[17] If Allah had been meant, the statement would have indicated him clearly.

abode. For the explanation of these visions (which are such as are not uncommon in the experience of prophets, ancient and modern) it is unnecessary to resort to the hypothesis of epilepsy. There is, in fact, no convincing evidence that Mohammed was an epileptic, and if he was indeed subject to epileptic attacks, this did not affect the sanity and cogency of his teaching. During his Meccan ministry he seems to have given much time to devotional exercises. Allah, he says (73), bade him rise from bed and devote the greater part of the night to prayer and the reading of the Koran; "Call on the name of thy Lord," said Allah, "devoting thyself exclusively to him." In Mecca he appears, in a word, to have been unworldly. While Khadijah lived she was his only wife; only after her death did he begin his remarkable accumulation of consorts, continued almost up to his last year. Some of these wives were widows of his followers, and it has been urged that he took most of them from motives of charity, to provide for them when they had lost their natural protectors. This may have been true in some cases, but in most of the marriages we have to recognize his passion for beautiful women.[18]

His intellectual qualities were such as are found in most religious organizers—insight and practical ability. Of erudition in our sense of the word there could be no question in the Arabia of that time. Learning consisted in the knowledge of poems and tribal traditions and sometimes of foreign stories—all acquired orally. Writings were few and there were few persons who could read them. The ideal man was a warrior and a robber (like the mediaeval robber baron); even poets were rarely masters of the mysterious arts of reading and writing. It is uncertain whether or not Mohammed could read and write. He several times (7 156, 158 *al.*) describes himself by an adjective (*ummi*) that may be rendered "illiterate" or "ignorant" or may mean "belonging to the common people"; in one place (29 47) he says that before the revelation of the Koran he could not read or write (or was not in the habit of reading and writing)—otherwise, it is added, his opponents might doubt; his ignorance or unaccustomedness in this regard is cited as proof that what he preached was from

[18] He married Sauda a few months after Khadijah's death, and took the Coptic maid Mary as concubine about two years before his own death.

Allah. He had a profound respect for the art of writing, which he says (96 4 f.) was taught man by Allah; if, however, he was acquainted with it, there is no indication in the Koran that he made use of it. The question is not an important one. Education in his day was not by reading and writing, but by observation of men and events, and he was a keen and intelligent observer, gathering facts from all quarters, and using them skilfully for his own purposes. Logical thinker he was not, but he had instinct that took the place of logic. He cannot be called a statesman, for he had no definite plan of political organization, but he accomplished much of what statesmanship aims to do. For many years it was Mecca that he expected to make his permanent home and the centre of his propaganda. Circumstances drove him to Medina, and there his course was shaped by events from day to day. He was always vigorous and determined, rarely headstrong. He was a born ruler of men, yet generally willing to listen to advice and be guided by it. A multitude of incidents illustrated his knowledge of human nature and his excellent practical judgment and power of achievement. It was demanded of him, for example, that he work miracles, but his good sense led him to disclaim the sort of power that his opponents had in mind; the Koran, he said, was his miracle.

He was a true prophet in the sense that he seized on and vigorously proclaimed certain fundamental religious conceptions much needed by the community in which he lived. He had also a gift not always possessed by prophets, wisdom to insist on the main things and to stop at the point where insistence became dangerous or fruitless. His whole career proves that he thoroughly believed the great doctrines he taught. Nor is there good reason to doubt that he believed himself called of God to preach. Possibly this conviction may have been suggested or strengthened by visions (such as are perhaps alluded to in 96 1 and 74 1), but its basis was probably his reflection and experience. He had come gradually to a practically monotheistic faith,[19] and believing this to be of prime importance for his generation, he could not

[19] One of his sons was named Abd Menāf, "servant of Menāf," a minor Koreish god. This was before he began to preach, at a time when he worshipped the local deities.

but hold that he was commissioned by Allah to proclaim it. His introduction of Allah as the dictator of his utterances is parallel to the usage of the Hebrew prophets, who preface their discourses with "thus saith Yahweh." Inferior though he was to these prophets in certain points, he had in common with them the consciousness of being divinely inspired. He bore himself, as a rule, with the dignity proper to the prophetic office.[20]

In his moral life there were conflicting elements. In his ordinary social relations, so far as appears, he was above reproach—he was honest, just, and kindly. He was disposed to show clemency to prisoners of war, except in cases where they had particularly angered him by ridicule, opposition, or barbarity. On the other hand, there appear in his conduct at certain times evidences of the dominance of passion, lack of moral clearness of vision, and abdication of personal moral responsibility. In his attitude toward his opponents it may often be hard to distinguish between the indignation of the apostle and the hatred of the man; but he rarely, if ever, shows moral discrimination in his judgments of his enemies. He does not apprehend the importance of the element of motive in actions, and he appears to have been incapable of understanding any point of view that differed from his own. The ground of the opposition of the Koreish to him was essentially the same as that of his opposition to them. In their eyes he was the enemy of the established civil and religious order; for him they were the enemies of the new order of which he was the representative. It did not occur to him to ask himself whether there might not be a patriotic motive, worthy of respect, in their antagonism to his revolutionary programme. Their tone is not commendable, neither is his. Both he and they were deficient in sympathy and in power of moral discrimination. From the point of view of political success Mohammed's mode of procedure proved to be good—reformers often have to be uncompromising and violent, and in the end the Koreish had to be beaten into submission; but his attitude was morally narrow, and has not led to the highest success.

[20] An instance of a less worthy regard for his dignity as ruler and great man is the injunction to his followers (49 2 ff.) not to talk familiarly with him or loudly in his presence; those who lower their voices, it is said, will have great reward.

Other sorts of moral weakness appear in his marriage to Zeinab, wife of his adopted son, Zeid. The account of the affair in the Koran (33 37) is of refreshing simplicity and directness:

> When thou saidst to him on whom Allah had conferred favors and thou hadst conferred favors, "Keep thy wife and fear Allah," and, fearing men (though it is better to fear Allah), thou didst conceal thy thought that Allah had determined to make manifest, then, when Zeid[21] determined to divorce her, we gave her to thee as wife, that believers may commit no sin when they marry the divorced wives of their adopted sons.

In this displeasing procedure Mohammed's chief fault was not that he set aside a generally acknowledged social rule in order to gratify his passion,[22] but that he profited by his position as apostle and employed an alleged divine revelation to justify his act. It is a proof of his power in Medina that he dared to use the Deity as the minister of his pleasures, and that his followers accepted his explanation (for the thing was so bad that an explanation was necessary) without losing faith in him. This incident, however, is only one example of his conception of his relations with the Deity—Allah is everywhere his sponsor and guarantor. Allah is said to dictate or relate to him various Biblical stories (as in 28 2) and extrabiblical legends of the Ephesian youths in the cave (18 12), Alexander (18 82), and others; he must have known that these came to him from men. When it becomes necessary to abrogate a verse, it is Allah that substitutes another verse for it (16 103 f.). He avers that he has had no assistance from man in composing the Koran—it is all a revelation from God (16 105). It is hard to say what his mental attitude was when he made such assertions; perhaps he meant that he was giving the stories in their correct form and with a proper application.[23] In any case his theory of the transmission of truth is confused, and he discards responsibility by throwing the burden on Allah, who is thus

[21] This is the only case in which a follower of Mohammed is mentioned by name in the Koran.

[22] He was not guilty of adultery and murder like David in the affair with Bathsheba, but in other respects his offence was more heinous than that of the Hebrew king.

[23] He asserted that the Jews had corrupted their scriptures (3 64 f.).

made responsible for the prophet's historical statements. This is perhaps the greatest sin a prophet can commit—it saps the foundations of moral life.

In Mohammed's political career the deed that his apologists find it hardest to defend is his treatment of the Jewish Kuraiza tribe. It is referred to in the Koran (33 26 f.) in a matter-of-fact way as an instance of Allah's favor to the true believers:

> The Jews who assisted the Meccans, Allah brought down from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts; some of them ye slew, some ye made captives, and Allah bestowed on you their land and their wealth.

The Kuraiza violated their agreement with Mohammed and sided with the Koreish in the battle of the ditch (627). After the battle (in which the Moslems were victorious) the Kuraiza were besieged and capitulated, and, according to Ibn Ishaq,[24] Mohammed left the decision of the fate of the survivors to a certain Saad, who decided that the men should be put to death and the women and children sold as slaves—which was accordingly done. The Jews were guilty of treachery, and according to the existing laws of war deserved punishment, but not so bloody a one—they might have been deported, and would then have been powerless for harm. Whether or not it was by another man that the sentence of death was pronounced, Mohammed approved it —"it is Allah's will" he is reported to have said—and he is to be held responsible for it.

In passing judgment on these procedures it is only fair to take into account the ideas and manners of the time and the peculiar nature of Mohammed's situation. The custom of blood-revenge then existed, and the usages in warfare were barbarous; women sometimes accompanied an army, and after a battle searched for and killed wounded personal enemies. There was no conception of the sanctity of human life. The marriage-bond was not held to be permanent; temporary unions were not uncommon, and the woman as well as the man had the right of divorce. Up to the capture of Mecca (two years and a half before his death)

[24] Ibn Isḥaq, pp. 688 ff., Germ. tr., pp. 107 ff. It is here said that the number of men killed in cold blood was, according to one report, between six and seven hundred, or, according to another report, between eight and nine hundred.

Mohammed lived in perpetual conflict. In Mecca the Koreish were hostile; in Medina there were, besides the Koreish, the disaffected in the city, the neighboring Jewish tribes, and the unreliable bedawin. It seemed to him necessary to control these dangerous elements by force, to remove or destroy them. He was a man of his time, and the time was not morally well-developed. Yet, making due allowance for these conditions, we must hold that a morally strong man ought to have risen above them.

The existence of features in Mohammed's conduct that appear from an ethical point of view mutually exclusive suggests the conclusion that there were mutually antagonistic tendencies and forces in his moral constitution. On the one hand, we find in him an attraction toward great religious ideas, and sympathy with the higher social code of the time. Other men of his time and people may have believed in a unitary divine government of the world and a judgment to come, but he alone took hold of this idea with such clearness, persistence, and enthusiasm as established it in the creed of Arabia and eventually in that of many neighboring lands. His prescriptions in the Koran (rules laid down, to be sure, primarily for others rather than for himself) show effort to lift the standard of the popular moral life. We may, probably, accept the tradition that in his early days in Mecca he was called "the faithful"—doubtless he was then trustworthy and morally exemplary. In the Koran he alludes to sins that he and his followers had committed (47 21, 48 2), but no details are given, and there is no sign of effort to overcome sinful propensities. On the other hand, he was in certain cases governed by passion—desire for revenge, love of sensual pleasure, ambition to rule; this ambition appears to have been the natural human craving for power intensified by the belief that as apostle of Allah he was invested with authority over all things. We may trace the conflict between the two sides of his nature throughout his public life, first one and then the other getting the upper hand, as circumstances were favorable to the one or the other. In Mecca, so far as the records go, the conditions brought out his more pleasing side. His domestic life seems to have been quiet and happy—his wife Khadijah, devoted to him and watch-

ful over him, is reported to have been a woman of firmness and good sense; and in the city, as he was politically impotent, there was no occasion or opportunity to assert himself except in warning his fellow-citizens of the fate that awaited them if they continued in unbelief. Soon after his wife's death he began to yield to that fondness for marriage that was to play so prominent a part in his life. On his settlement in Medina he found himself free from external authority. He was surrounded by enthusiastic friends, there was no one to call him to account, there grew up a belief that he could do no wrong; it was here that the lower side of his nature came to the front—he was at times self-indulgent, intolerant, despotic. Yet not always—when fear of opposition was removed, he could show himself kindly, thoughtful for others, lenient toward the erring. When Mecca was captured he treated the people with a kindness that won him their hearty allegiance. His address at the final pilgrimage, a few months before his death, when all Arabia was at his feet, is marked by dignity and tenderness. He spoke as one to whom God had committed the care for the temporal and eternal interests of his people, and with the happy consciousness that he had performed his duty and finished his work, leaving, in the Koran, a sufficient guide for this world and the next. Through all his temperamental conflicts he had kept steadily in view what gradually shaped itself as his aim in life, the establishment of a pure religion among the people of Arabia. It is this aim that gives unity to his life. He seems never to have lost self-respect and confidence in his mission and his power. To his devout followers in all ages he has been not a fallible man in whose bosom there was a war of impulses, but the type of perfect manhood. This devotion to an imperfect type might seem to exert an unfortunate influence on the ethical ideas of his disciples. Whether or how far it has done so it is hard to say. But the ill effects that might have followed blind imitation of him have been largely set aside by a process of idealization: whatever in his conduct or teaching has seemed to be opposed to the current ethical standard has been explained away by familiar exegetical methods; or, if some slight infirmity is admitted, it is held not to tarnish the beauty of a soul devoted to the service of God and man.

II. The Religion of the Koran

To a modern non-Moslem reader the Koran may seem to be merely an ill-arranged mass of matter, much of which is trivial or irrelevant. Such a judgment, ignoring, as it does, the great rôle played by the book in religious history, would be superficial. It is true that we find many of the discourses tedious. They abound in repetitions of argument, invective, denunciation, self-assertion, legend, and myth, and they seem to be composed of scraps pieced together without regard to logical order. This half-chaotic form is due to the way in which the discourses were composed, uttered, and edited. A preacher who finds himself obliged to address groups of people for many years on a few leading topics necessarily repeats himself. It was in Mecca that Mohammed gradually put his ideas and his arguments into shape. When he began to preach, he had long since ceased to travel on commercial errands. It was in Mecca that he learned legends of Biblical and other personages and formulated his conception of the divine government of the world. Stories of prophets and descriptions of the day of judgment and of paradise and hell doubtless came to him in scraps, and were introduced by him into his appeals in this form. His discourses must have been somehow written down by his disciples, but as to who his reporters were and of their mode of procedure we have no information. It seems improbable or impossible that the discourses could have the literary form which they show in some passages in the Koran unless they were revised or dictated by him. Soon after his arrival in Medina he employed as amanuensis a well-instructed young man, Zeid son of Thabit by name,[25] by whom his words would be more exactly set down, and he may have had amanuenses in Mecca. But whatever revision or dictation there may have been in Mecca has not done away with the fragmentary character of the discourses. After his death the scattered reports of his sermons were collected and made into a book by this Zeid (by command of the Calif Abu Bekr in the year 633), and it was he who conducted the final revision of the text seventeen years later, giving it the form in which we have it. Though the revision was not formally as careful as it might have been (in

[25] His adopted son was Zeid son of Haritha.

the present text there are sentences syntactically incomplete), there is no reason to doubt that it has preserved Mohammed's utterances with substantial correctness and fulness. The Koran is the only sacred book in the world that is the composition of a single man. While this unitary origin gives it unity of thought and rhetorical impressiveness, it is a disadvantage so far as it confines the ideas of the book within the bounds of one mind and allows no escape from the intellectual and spiritual limitations of its author.

The religion of the Koran, like the religion of the New Testament, arose from the confluence of several different systems of thought, and its elements are in some important respects identical with those of the earlier book. But in the historical conditions of its genesis it differs notably from the latter. The New Testament took shape in an enlightened age, in an atmosphere of refined Judaism permeated with fresh and inspiring Greek thought. The birthplace of the Koran was a half-civilized community which was in some sort of contact with a stagnant Judaism and a debased Christianity. Mohammed's religious nourishment was drawn in part from the popular cult of Arab tribes, in part from the higher conceptions then existing in Arabia and elsewhere. The old Arabian material of supernatural beings was that which appears everywhere in the undeveloped Semitic world, namely, local gods, regarded as all-sufficient each for his community, and local spirits (*jinn*), mostly hostile to men, and attached to outlying regions not occupied by human beings. Arabia produced no great god, but in many places the local divine chief and protector had acquired a character of considerable dignity; so it was in the southern cults, Minean, Sabean, and Himyaritic, and largely also in the northern part of the country. In the region in and about Mecca the local divinity was generally known simply as "the god" (*al-ilah*, pronounced "*allah*"), and to this name Mohammed sometimes appealed as an argument for his monolatry: "when," said he, "anything happens, you say that Allah has done it."[26] He used the name in a sense different

[26] There is here, perhaps, an allusion to Hobal, the patron deity of Mecca. This deity is not mentioned by name in the Koran, but the Meccans would naturally think of him when they heard the expression quoted in the text; Allah, "the god," was for them their special god.

from that in which they understood it: they meant by it the local god, he meant the one only supreme God, so that his argument was little better than a quibble except for those who had got a higher conception of the Deity. How far such a conception had penetrated Mecca we do not know. Besides the Jewish tribes settled near Yathreb (Medina) and the Christian, Jewish, and Persian circles in the south, there was a line of christianized or half-christianized Arabian tribes in the north (extending westward from Hira), and Mecca was doubtless influenced by this body of belief, though whether it had touched the mass of the people is uncertain. The tradition tells of a small number of men who gave up the Arabian cult, accepting Christianity or Judaism, or holding aloof from both. It is in this last category that Mohammed belongs. He represents Arabian Semitism touched by outside influences; his was the constructive genius that selected what his time demanded, and made it real and potent.

In all religions the deity is the central figure, in all Semitic religions, and among these especially in the Jewish, the deity is external to man, transcendent and absolute, and in the Koran the quality of absoluteness is most distinctly stated and most vehemently insisted on. The divine administration of the world, issuing solely from the will of Allah, may be said to be the differentia of the Koranic system.[27] It is the distinction of Mohammed that he laid hold of this conception and maintained it with unflinching strictness against the current polytheism. This unshaken consistency he owed in part, doubtless, to his intellectual limitations—he was unaffected by difficulties that have troubled many other religious thinkers—but, whatever its origin, it has given tone to the Koran. In the Koran the aloneness of Allah and his universal creative power are assumed, and opposing beliefs are denounced as absurd and wicked.[28] The Arabian

[27] Allah's sway embraces everything, from the courses of the heavenly bodies and of empires to the details of Mohammed's management of his wives. He combines the functions of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the protecting deities of the Roman household.

[28] For Mohammed a trinitarian conception of the deity was unthinkable, as, indeed, no Semitic people has ever adopted such a conception. His understanding was that the Christian Trinity consisted of God, Jesus, and the mother of Jesus (5 116).

gods are declared to be impotent, and a special argument is directed against the three goddesses known as "daughters of Allah," whose worship was widely diffused. They were originally local divinities, and this title seems to have meant originally that they were divine beings, just as the Old Testament title "sons of the Elohim" ("sons of God") describes certain beings as members of the Elohim class. Neither among the Hebrews nor among the Arabs do we find married gods or (except in the cases here cited) mention of a relation of parent and child between two deities. But in the Koran the word "daughters" is taken literally, and there is scorn for the supposition that Allah should be assigned children of the inferior sex: "what? you have sons and Allah daughters?"; "when one of them is told of the birth of a daughter, his face becomes black, he is distressed, he conceals himself from men, doubtful whether to keep [the child] to his disgrace or hide it in the dust."[29] Whether or not this consideration affected the Meccans we are not informed, but Mohammed put a stop to the practice of infanticide as soon as he came into power.

The argument in the Koran for Allah's governmental control of the world is derived from the phenomena of nature and of human life. Allah, it is said, has created all things, including human beings, *jinn*, and angels (and Iblis [*diabolos*] was originally one of the angels),[30] and has ordered things for man's comfort, the rain, fruits, cattle, waters, and ships that move through the seas; thunder also he sends to call forth fear and hope.[31] Stories of Pharaoh, Ad, Thamud, and other peoples are narrated to show that national experiences are produced by Allah in furtherance of his righteous plans (Sura 54 and many others). Sometimes, as for example in the stories of the Queen of Sheba (27) and Alexander the Great (18),[32] the narrator appears to be absorbed in the adventures of the hero or heroine and to lose sight of the appro-

[29] 53 19; 16 59 ff.

[30] 2 32; but in 18 48 he is said to be one of the *jinn*—a revised opinion, perhaps, to free the angelic host from so undesirable a member.

[31] 88 17 ff.; 55; 36 34 ff.; 27 60 ff.; 13 2 ff., 13 ff.

[32] He is here called Dhu al-qarnein, "he of the two horns," a name probably derived from the representations of Alexander on coins on which he is depicted with horns as the symbol of divinity.

priate religious teaching; the tests to which the queen is subjected by Solomon are neither religious nor dignified. But, in general, the narratives illustrate the fact that not even the mightiest kings and nations can maintain themselves against Allah's power. The legends are treated as veritable history, and were doubtless so regarded by the Arab masses. A certain man, it is said (31 5), amused the Meccans with rival stories (probably brought from Persia) seeking to seduce them from the truth; but such stories were denounced by Mohammed and (if they have survived) appear only in the later Persian literature.

Though Allah is thus throughout the Koran described as omnipotent, his power is practically limited and his plans to some extent thwarted by the old Arabian *jinn*, by the Christian figures of Iblis (the Devil) and his attendant satans, and by the men who are misled by these hostile powers. The problem of the quasi-dualistic control of the world is treated by Mohammed in characteristic fashion. The New Testament and the Avesta accept the rôle of the great enemy as a fact and offer no explanation of its origin; the Koran describes its genesis and attempts to harmonize it with Allah's supreme power. When Adam was created—so the account runs [33]—and the angels were commanded to pay him homage, all obeyed except Iblis, who refused to recognize Adam's superiority on the ground that the latter was created of clay, but he himself of fire.[34] Thereupon he was cursed and condemned to dwell in hell. He begged, however, to be respited until the day of judgment, and, this request having been granted,[35] he frankly announced his purpose to seduce all men except the chosen of Allah. The situation was accepted by Allah, who indeed employed Iblis and satans and *jinn* to lead men astray. His omnipotence was thus saved, but with the result that a moral question was raised which is not seriously considered in the Koran. As for the satans and the *jinn*, their functions are the same as those of Iblis, but with one exception: some of the *jinn* were well acquainted with religious history, knew of the book of Moses, came

[33] 2 32 ff.; 4 117 ff.; 7 10 ff.; 38 71 ff.

[34] That is, he was of the class of gods, and thus above a human being.

[35] A similar liberty is accorded the Evil Power in the New Testament (2 Thess. 2 9 ff.; Rev. 20 7 ff.), and is assumed in the Avesta and the Bundahish.

(invisible) and listened to Mohammed's reading (or reciting) of the Koran, became Moslems, and preached the faith.[36] Whether or not the intention in this account is to distinguish between the religious receptivity of the native Arabian spirits and that of the Christian and Jewish satans the Koran does not inform us; but the story bears witness to a belief in the adaptation of his creed to the whole universe, with, probably, the exclusion of the Devil and his immediate attendants.

Mohammed's conception of the Koran and its teaching is intimately connected with his doctrine of Allah's sovereignty. He describes it as the transcript of an original volume preserved in heaven: "We have made it an Arabic Koran, that ye may understand it; it is in the original book with us, exalted, wise" (43 2 f.):[37] selections from this celestial book were made known to preceding apostles, and appear as Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and now the final revelation has been sent down to the Arabs, explaining and completing all that has gone before. This grandiose conception of an eternal body of truth made known to men in parts, as they have been prepared to receive it, is maintained throughout the Koran, and the primacy and finality of the Arabic book is defended in ways proper to the time, with naïve assertions based on fortunate ignorance of history. Yet, though the Koran is innocent of knowledge of historical details, its general construction of the religious history of the world is remarkably simple, clear, and striking. It embraces in its view all the great religious movements known to Mohammed and combines them into a unity ;[38] each fulfils its purpose, and is expected to retire at the appearance of the later and better revelation. This unitary construction of history appears further in the rôle assigned to Abraham. Jewish tradition represented Abraham not only as the great ancestor of Israel, but also as the establisher of true

[36] 46 28 ff.; 72 1–14; cf. Jas. 2 19; 1 Pet. 3 19.

[37] The rabbinical descriptions of the Tora as the copy of a heavenly book are, doubtless, figurative representations of the eternal significance of the national Law.

[38] It is doubtful whether Mohammed had any definite knowledge of Mazdeanism; its dual scheme is not mentioned in the Koran, and would naturally be incomprehensible or absurd to a strictly monocratic Semitic prophet.

religion in the world after the flood.[39] The Epistle to the Galatians (chap. 3) finds proof of the temporary nature of Judaism in the religion of Abraham, and Mohammed, enlarging this general view, goes back of both Christianity and Judaism, and makes the patriarch the representative and leader of the faith embodied in Islam (2 124 ff.). Abraham, he says (3 60), was neither Jew nor Christian, but *hanif*, moslem, not idolater. It was a happy thought on Mohammed's part to make Abraham his patron, an illustration of his power of seizing on a current idea, weaving it into his system and making it effective for his purposes. The old Jewish patriarch was acknowledged by both Jews and Christians to be a divinely appointed model, his distinctive characteristic was faith in the one only true God, and this was the essence of Islam—who could be so blind as not to see this fact, or so perverse as not to accept this original divinely-revealed religion? The proper signification of the term *hanif* is uncertain; it is used in the Koran as identical in meaning with "moslem," that is, "one who discards the worship of all gods but Allah."[40] There is mention of contemporaries of Mohammed who, independently of his teaching, were *hanifs;* these appear to have been isolated monotheists—there is no proof of the existence of a hanifite organization. The term, whatever its original meaning and application, gave way to the more definite "moslem," which became the distinctive appellation of the new faith.

The Allah of the Koran represents in important respects an ethical standard far superior to that of its time. He enjoins, and maintains by future rewards and punishments, a moral code admirable for a peaceful society—he is the enemy of all conduct that interferes with the relations that should exist among the members of such a society. In one place (59 22) he is styled "the King, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Powerful, the Strong, the Exalted." It is assumed throughout that he is just, in the sense that he treats men in this world and the next in accordance with their deserts; if he sends

[39] Josephus, Antiq. 1 7.

[40] Wellhausen (Reste arabischen Heidentumes, pp. 207 f.) thinks it is employed simply in the sense of "Christian"; but though it includes Christians, it is doubtful whether it did not also include any monotheists.

adversity on the good, it is to try them, and prosperity is accorded the bad that they may be led on to work out their own condemnation (19 76 ff.). He is merciful to mankind, bestowing on them all pleasant influences and products of nature, and merciful and forgiving to those who sin ignorantly, or, if they sin knowingly, afterwards repent (32 5, 41 1, and many other passages). In the latter part of Mohammed's ministry in Mecca Allah is frequently called *al-Rahman*, "the Merciful" (21, 25, 43, 44, 17 110), but this title appears to have been dropped in Medina, for what reason we do not know.[41] He is everywhere spoken of as gracious to believers and especially to Mohammed, and on those who obey him he bestows love (19 96). The character thus depicted is in general an attractive one. It must also be remembered that he represented an effective idea of brotherhood in society, not, certainly, the brotherhood of all men, but in a real sense the brotherhood of all Moslems. He helped to banish or diminish tribal animosities, and he dignified moral rules and made them more effective by giving them a divine origin and divine sanctions.[42] On the other hand, traits of the old life cling to him. He approves or condones acts that are violations of a good social code. He indulges a revengeful spirit, he is violent and bitter against personal enemies; of such an one he says (96 15 ff.): "If he cease not we will seize him by the forelock, the lying sinful forelock—and let him summon his friends, we will summon the guards [of hell]"; the picture of the supreme God seizing an unfortunate mortal by the hair does not accord with a refined conception of the divine character. He dispenses the horrors of hell with a freedom that smacks of malicious pleasure. His conception of justice is largely determined by external conditions—the persons who deserve reward are those who truthfully acknowledge his supremacy and the leadership of his apostle, all others deserve punishment. In this respect he is the enlargement of the tribal god, who is kind to his own people and hostile to all other peoples. He is the embodiment of the spirit

[41] Perhaps because it was a foreign (Jewish) title of the Deity. It was also South Arabian.

[42] See the excellent injunction in 49 9-12, and cf. 3 97 (the bond of faith is stronger than the bond of blood).

of Arabia, and more particularly of the spirit of Mohammed, of whose virtues and faults his character is a copy.

In the Koranic religion, as in all primitive theistic religions, the problem of one form of governmental dualism, the relation between divine and human wills, is passed over without comment and without embarrassment. Allah is absolute governor of men, chooses for his own whom he will (42 6, 6 87 ff.), and no one can believe except by his permission (10 100); he is the creator of the soul, endows it with its capacity for good and for evil (91 7), and decides whether it shall follow the one or the other. Yet man is held strictly responsible for his deeds, every individual for himself, every one must bear his own burden (44 40 f.); at the last day no one shall make satisfaction for another, no intercession will be accepted, of men or angels (2 117, 53 26), except that of persons permitted by Allah. Man, in a word, is free (3 139). Happy is he who turns to righteousness, wretched he who turns to wickedness (91 9 f.). The question whether there is a rational order of the world would be alien to the spirit of the Koran; it is concerned not with devices of human reason but with the pleasure of the divine mind. And it is clear and consistent in its teaching that there is a moral order in the world. Allah's purposes, it holds, are all morally good and his ability to realize them is unlimited—whatever failures in this regard may seem to men to exist would be explained if men had greater knowledge—man's unbelief or doubt on this point results from his ignorance.[43]

The divine worship prescribed in the Koran is simple. Mohammed retained certain ceremonies that he found too firmly established in the affections of the people (or which, perhaps, were too highly esteemed by himself) to be discarded. Such are the pilgrimage to the Kaaba at the great annual festival and the ceremonies connected therewith (the compassing of the sacred building, the visit to the sacred mountain Arafat, the devotional season in the valley of Mina, the sacrifice, the casting of stones at the Devil). He himself reverently performed the pilgrimage

[43] This principle is illustrated in the story of Moses' journey (18 59 ff.). The prophet who is his guide does things that seem to Moses to be cruel, but they are shown to be wise and kind.

and took part in all the ceremonies. These, which are similar to customs found all over the world, had great religious significance for the Arabs as methods of bringing them into contact with the god of the place; exactly what they meant for Mohammed we do not know. He abolished some improper features, especially the going round the Kaaba naked, and made the rest obligatory on his followers.[44] The institution of the pilgrimage has helped to make Mecca the central point of the world for Moslems and thus to strengthen their sense of unity; and a peculiar importance is given the Kaaba by the statement (22 27, 2 119 ff.) that Allah assigned the site of the building to Abraham.

Mohammed, however, having before him the examples of communities of Jews and Christians, felt the need of a more stable and more devotional organization of his people, and took from the neighboring sects such arrangements as seemed to him appropriate and sufficient. Local places of worship (mosques) were established, one day in the week was set apart for public worship, and the order of service in the mosque, consisting of prayer, reading from the sacred scriptures, and an address, was copied from that of the synagogues and the churches. The choice of Friday for the sacred day was, doubtless, induced by the desire to have a day different both from that of the Jews and from that of the Christians. There is no mention in the Koran of officers of a mosque (62 9). In Medina, where the first mosque was established, the service was usually conducted by the prophet (4 103), afterwards by the calif, a governor, or other prominent man, or by a regularly appointed *imam* ("leader"); the sermon was delivered by the preacher (*khatib*), who might also officiate as *imam*, but in case of need any person might act as *imam*. There is no priesthood in Islam; sacrifice plays a subordinate part, and may be performed by any one in authority. The old-arabian *kahin* was a soothsayer,[45] through whom the will of the deity was made known. Contact with the god was effected by ceremonies in which little use was made of blood, and this con-

[44] 2 192–199, 22 25 ff., 37 ff.

[45] The corresponding Hebrew word, *kohen*, means "priest." The offices of soothsayer and priest go back to the same original, the magician.

ception is retained in the Koran—there are no communal meals, no substitution of an animal victim for the sinner or, in general, atonement by blood. The place of such procedures is taken by obedience.

All public religious ritualistic details and conditions of membership in a religious community are necessarily external and may be mechanical. In the Koranic scheme any one is a Moslem who professes belief in the aloneness of Allah and the apostleship of Mohammed, recites the daily *salāt* ("prayers"), gives the legal alms, fasts during the month of Ramadan, and performs the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime. The official *salāt* is not petition but recital of praise, to be performed a certain number of times during the day. The indication of hours of *salāt* in the Koran is not quite definite: "celebrate the praise of thy Lord before sunrise and before sunset and during the night and evening and morning" (20 130); "glorify Allah at evening, morning, afternoon, and noon" (30 17); "perform the *salāt* at early morning, at close of day, and at approach of night, for good deeds put to flight evil deeds" (11 116); "perform the *salāt* at sunset, at nightfall, and at daybreak" (17 80). It seems likely that stated times were established by Mohammed after a while (6 71), possibly the five seasons that became the custom (noon, afternoon, sunset, night, dawn). It is enjoined that the recital be neither very loud nor very low, and it is to be prepared for by washing. At first Moslems in Medina turned toward Jerusalem in prayer; later, in order to make the exercise purely Arabian, the place (*kibla*) was changed to Mecca (2 136 ff.). The proper attitude in prayer is prostration: David, it is said, fell down and bowed himself and repented (38 23): "Perform the *salāt* and pay the alms, and bow down with those who bow down" (2 40). No details of the prostration are given in the Koran; at a later time the *salāt* was defined by the number of prostrations (*rekas*) of which it consisted, and the performances tended to become mechanical. This official "prayer" is not, however, the only kind commended in the Koran. Servants of Allah are represented as addressing petitions to him for higher as well as for lower blessings. Abraham is made to pray in the following words: "O Lord, grant me wisdom and join me with the righteous; and grant

me an honorable report among future generations; and make me an heir of the garden of delight; and forgive my father that he was one of those who went astray; and cover me not with shame on the day of resurrection, the day when neither riches nor children shall avail, but only the coming to Allah with a pure [or, believing] heart" (26 83 ff.). Job prays to be freed from his affliction (21 83), Moses that he may be able to perform the divine commands (20 26 ff.), David for forgiveness (38 23), and the Ephesian youths for mercy (18 9). Such persons are regarded in the Koran as models for Moslems—the latter are commanded to turn to Allah with sincere repentance and ask for perfect light and pardon (66 6–9), being assured that he hears the prayers of his servants (2 182). The petitions in the opening sura (the *fátiha*, the Moslem "pater noster") are simple and comprehensive: "Thee we worship and of thee we ask assistance. Direct us in the right way, the way of those to whom thou art gracious, not those with whom thou art angry, and not those who go astray" (cf. 3 14 f.). Mohammed himself was in the habit of praying (9 85 and other passages). Little is said in the Koran concerning prayer for the dead. It is directed (2 196) that at the conclusion of the ceremonies of the pilgrimage the worshippers shall make reverent mention of Allah (or, have him reverently in mind) as they make mention (or, are mindful) of their fathers—a form of expression that suggests some sort of cult of ancestors. In old Arabia graves were sometimes shrines (and so it is now), but there is no trace of such worship in the Koran.

The two remaining prescribed duties have no religious value. In Medina contributions for the support of the Meccan immigrants were necessary, and such almsgiving was, doubtless, recognized as a social duty as well as a religious prescription; when this social situation ceased to exist (as it did very soon), the tax for alms fell into the category of state taxes, and no longer made appeal to individual kindly feeling—it was paid, of course, in obedience to the prophet's command. The establishment of the Ramadan fast was a mistake on Mohammed's part. The custom of fasting, which he knew existed among the Jews and the Christians, probably seemed to him useful for the promotion of piety (and his temperament may have made such abstinence easy

for him). But the fast inevitably became obstructive of devotion, and the absolute prohibition of food during daylight for a month made too great a demand on human power of endurance.[46] Asceticism has never been a feature of Semitic religion—where it exists in Moslem lands it is of non-Semitic origin—and this attempt to introduce it, in mild form, into Islam has not been religiously a success.

When we pass from external conditions to the inner religious life, the definition of the Koranic teaching is less easy. As, on the divine side, Allah's claim to obedience is the central point of doctrine, so, on the human side, man's attitude toward this claim is the controlling fact. Sin is the violation of divine law, and in the Koran all law, the ethical as well as the religious, is divine. The Koranic moral code is excellent—it includes respect for human life and property in ordinary social conditions, and for the marriage relation (polygamy and the right of divorce being conceded), justice in commercial transactions, kindness to orphans, to divorced women, to the poor, and to believers in general.[47] It does not distinctly recognize the claims of all men, without distinction of race or creed, to sympathetic treatment. The summary in 2 172 is authoritative:

> Righteousness does not consist in turning the face [in prayer] to the east or the west, but belongs to him who believes in Allah and the last day, and in the angels, the book [that is, the Koran] and the prophets—who gives money (though he loves it) to his kindred, to orphans, to the needy and the wayfarer, and to those who ask for it, and for [the redemption of] captives; and performs the *salāt*, and pays the [prescribed] alms; and to those who keep their agreements, and are patient in times of adversity.

It is of course taken for granted that Moslems will obey the ethical law. But the stress is laid on the religious law, and naturally the fundamental sin is unbelief. It is against the unbelief of

[46] The length of the fast was, perhaps, suggested by that of the Christian Lent. In modern times the smoking of tobacco has been included in the prohibitory rule. It is said that there is more quarrelling in Ramadan than in any other month of the year.

[47] The civil code, like that of the Old Testament, recognizes the *lex talionis* (2 173 ff.).

Ad, Thamud, and Madian, idolaters, pretending friends (the "hypocrites"), and *jinn* that denunciations are hurled throughout the Koran. The violence of the invective, the furious hate, shows the importance that was attached to the profession of belief in Allah and his apostle, and indeed it was a matter of life and death for Islam to secure this adhesion in Arabia. Hence Mohammed's detestation of the Jews, who refused to change their faith. The question how to treat Jews and also Christians was an embarrassing one for him. They formed a class by themselves—in respect that they did not accept Islam they were unbelievers, but in respect that they followed the divinely accredited prophets Moses and Jesus, they could not be regarded as idolaters or as enemies of Allah. In some passages they are regarded as entitled to future reward, the only condition being that they believe in God and the last day and do what is [morally] right (2 50, 5 73).[48] In one place they are mentioned along with those who join other gods with Allah, and it is said that Allah will decide between them on the day of resurrection (22 17).[49] Later, the obstinate opposition of the Jews led the prophet to declare that the curse of Allah was on them (2 82 ff.), and Christians are denounced as infidels for their worship of Christ and Mary along with Allah (5 17 ff.). Finally, protection is accorded the non-idolatrous dissentient sects on condition of their paying tribute (9 29).

In the Koran "faith," or "belief," is the acceptance of Mohammed's creed and mission. In Mecca this test divided the people into two parties, headed respectively by Mohammed and the Koreish; in Medina the civil and the religious governments became one—acceptance of Islam was a necessary condition of citizenship. Thus the term "belief" received a political coloring, and political passion entered the Islamic propaganda. There is no attempt to define belief as a spiritual force or to trace the shades and moral significance of unbelief. Trust in God there is —it is the conviction that Allah would give the victory to his apostle, a conviction that appears to have sustained him

[48] With them are included the Sabians, an obscure Christian sect.

[49] Here the Magians also are included. Mohammed seems to have known nothing of Zoroastrianism beyond the fact that it was not idolatrous.

in adversity and made him despotic (though his despotism was sometimes tempered with kindness) in prosperity. Unbelief is regarded as a wilful opposition to truth, to be crushed, when argument is unavailing, by the strong hand of God or man.

Sin is taken (as in the Old Testament) as an obvious fact of human life, and no curiosity is expressed as to its psychological origin.[50] The account of Adam's initial transgression is identical with that in Genesis (2 33 ff., 7 18 ff.), but it is added that he was taught by Allah the proper form of words (that is, in asking for pardon), repented, and was forgiven.[51] He does not transmit a sinful nature to his descendants,[52] but he is a warning to them. The tempter was Satan, and the satans have been appointed by Allah patrons of unbelievers (7 26). There is no conception of spiritual regeneration or spiritual struggle in the Koran. The point of view is purely objective in the sense that regard is paid merely to deeds. A man fails to believe because he is blind, he believes because he comes to see; but there is no distinct statement concerning a reconstruction of his spiritual nature. This objective conception was suited to Mohammed's time and people, and has commended Islam to many persons since his time.

Life is held to consist of one act of faith and a mass of religious and general social acts, and these are to be rewarded or punished. The rewards and punishments are relegated to the future[53] —in this life a pious man may suffer and a wicked man may prosper, but this will not be the case hereafter. The descriptions of future recompenses are couched in naïvely sensuous terms, relating to food and drink, the possession of pure and beautiful wives, and other such pleasures; they are to be taken literally—there is nothing in the text to suggest that they are meant to be under-

[50] Mohammed, as is noted above, often confesses that he is a sinner, but the nature of his sin is not stated.

[51] Eve is included in the history, but merely as the companion of Adam; she is not the first transgressor.

[52] The statement that the Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam (7 171) is simply an expression of descent; so in Heb. 7 5, 10.

[53] The vanity of earthly things is insisted on in 57 19, 47 38, 16 78.

stood figuratively;[54] but the pleasures, though sensuous, are not sensual or in any way immoral. The details of punishment are such as are found in early Christian apocalypses and are repeated in the *Divina Commedia*. The accompaniments of the last day also are taken from Christian sources: the blast of the trumpet, the cleaving of the heavens, and the scattering of sun, moon, and stars; the shattering earthquake, when the mountains shall pass away, and the earth shall cast forth the contents of its graves; when all men shall rise, clothed in their bodies,[55] and shall stand before the judgment-seat, alongside of which the angels are drawn up in ranks; to every man his record-book is given—those into whose right hands the books are given pass on to the joyful life; those who receive their books in their left hands or behind their backs pass into hell.[56] There is no appeal from the divine decision, and no end to the happiness and the misery. The determining fact in any person's record is his or her attitude toward Islam. Women, no less than men, may obtain the bliss of paradise (33 31 ff., 40 43), but what their relation will be to the celestial wives[57] is not explained. Nor is there any clear statement regarding the lot of believers who live immoral lives on earth. We expect the ethical character of deeds to be considered: "On that day men shall go forward in separate groups to see their deeds; and he who shall have done good of the weight of an ant shall see it, and he who shall have done evil of the weight of an ant shall see it" (99); and in many passages good works are spoken of as a condition of acceptance with Allah and as the best possession of a man (3 79, etc.). But the good works referred to are often clearly not ethical but doctrinal and ritual,[58] and the righteous are defined as those who keep the requirements of Islam (almsgiving and the rest). The Koranic teaching is

[54] Apparently, believers pass immediately at death into paradise (3 152). And there are suggestions of something better than sensual pleasures, a general happy peace. But of spiritual delights nothing is said.

[55] The idea of bodily resurrection was taken by Mohammed from the Jews and the Christians.

[56] See suras 75–101; 39 68 ff.; 3 193.

[57] The *huris* (56 22 ff., 34 f.).

[58] In 6 121 the eating of forbidden food is described as "iniquity." In 9 112 ff. the requirements are: to fight for Allah's cause, to fast, bow down, and worship, to command what is just and forbid what is evil, and observe the ordinances of Allah.

definite that unbelievers (leaving aside the doubtful case of the dissident monotheistic sects) are to be cast into hell;[59] and we get from the text the definite impression that there is no doubt about the future felicity of those who continue firm in faith. Perhaps it is taken for granted that such believers will not persist in things morally wrong—for slips in conduct there is repentance, and Allah is merciful and gracious; and even at the last judgment there is provision for intercession by persons (angels and Mohammed) to whom Allah grants this privilege.[60] The admission that a believer might possibly fail to enter paradise because of moral delinquencies would have been discouraging to the Moslems of Mohammed's day, a time when it was all-important to keep the support of all his followers.

The religion of the Koran regards man as standing alone in the presence of God, a free agent before an absolute lord. In spite of Iblis, satans, and *jinn* Allah is omnipotent, and in spite of Allah's omnipotence man is master of his fate. Obedience is all that is required of him, and he may obey or not as he may please. There is no intermediary between him and his divine judge—Mohammed is a man and, like other men, must ask forgiveness for his sins, and such intercession as is casually mentioned in the Koran is controlled (allowed or forbidden) by Allah, and seems to have no practical importance. There is no atoning ceremony—pardon is granted in response to repentance and prayer. All intermediate persons and conditions are swept away—so far as a man's future welfare is concerned, there are only two Powers in the universe, himself and Allah. Allah does not inquire curiously into motives and other inner experiences—these are left to manifest themselves in deeds. Nor does he expect intimate communion of soul between himself and believers—he is, indeed, too exalted for such converse, he understands man and the world, but man cannot understand him, and he confines his demands on men to what they are capable of. The Moslem of the Koran is not an analytical thinker or a searcher of his own heart; his life is made up of outward things, like that of the warrior of the desert. The Koranic ethical standard has a similar external

[59] Apostates may repent, and be forgiven, provided they do not go on in unbelief (3 79 ff.).

[60] Sura 2 256; 9 81.

character—it does not define or insist on inward truthfulness, self-sacrifice, love. The moral rules do not contemplate non-moslem communities; it is assumed that all the world ought to be Moslem, and those peoples that stand aloof must take the consequences—the legislation is not for them. The ethical experience of Islam has been similar to that of other religions: the theoretical acceptance of rules does not necessarily carry with it obedience to them in actual life. The most humane and benevolent of Koranic prescriptions—that which relates to brotherhood among believers—was set at naught, not long after the prophet's death, in bloody conflicts between rival parties. This fact, however, must not blind us to the excellence of Mohammed's moral code, or to the unifying and inspiring tendency of his conception of the unitary divine government of the world and the equality of all believers, without distinction of sex, social position, or nationality, in the eyes of the divine overlord.

III. The Historical Development of the Koranic Faith

Both the vigor and the flexibility of the religion of the Koran are illustrated by its later fortunes. Though it was, in a real sense, the product of its age, it was put into shape by the hand of a master whose genius or instinct taught him to make universal ideas prominent and to reduce accessories almost to a minimum. During the prophet's lifetime all Arabia submitted to him, and in the centuries succeeding his death Islam spread over Western Asia, Egypt, the north coast of Africa, and the south of Spain, then over parts of Central Asia, China, Indonesia, the Philippine Islands, Central Africa, and Northern and Southern India, finally gaining a foothold in Eastern Europe. Its conquests in these lands were accomplished sometimes by force, sometimes by peaceful social pressure, sometimes by its moral and intellectual superiority, sometimes by a combination of two or more of these influences. In the majority of cases its propaganda appears to have been carried on by peaceful means. Political and social rewards, which were all in the hands of the conquerors, proved to be a powerful inducement to conversion. There was often a social fusion of conquerors and conquered, and this was

accompanied by mutual religious influence. The conquered peoples, while adopting Islam, retained every one its native intellectual and religious coloring, and contact with ancient culture (mainly through translations of Greek works) brought new points of view and new constructions of religious thought and life. These conditions produced certain modifications of the Koranic scheme in various parts of the Moslem world.

When a higher religion is nominally accepted by an undeveloped community, it often happens that old ideas and usages are retained, with new names taken from the new creed, or without an attempt to harmonize the two schemes. This has been the case in the history of Islam in certain regions, just as, in mediaeval and modern Europe, the popular religion kept and still keeps heathen customs and beliefs, with a veneering of Christian forms. In northern Arabia the worship of ancestors is widely practised by the desert tribes, and in the south of the peninsula crude fetishistic and magical observances are found. Similar ideas and customs exist in Egypt and Morocco and among certain African tribes. Or, Moslems, living in communities with well-organized religious systems, sometimes conform to a greater or less extent to the usages of their neighbors—in India Brahmanistic customs are adopted by not a few Moslems (mostly of the lower class), in China many of the faith have taken part in the official worship of Confucius, and have thus often escaped persecution. In none of these cases, however, is there any desire to modify or reinterpret the creed of the Koran. They are merely concessions to traditional beliefs or to pressing considerations of peace and safety. In Spain, when the Christians got the upper hand, many Moslems and Jews gave in their adherence to the church, and kept their devotion to Mohammed and Moses respectively.

An interesting definition of the teaching of the Koran on one point was occasioned by the growth of the Moslem empire. In the ninth sura it is ordered that idolaters (except those with whom treaties had been made) should be attacked[61] until they accepted Islam, and that Jews and Christians should be forced to become

[61] The verb is sometimes *jahad*, "work earnestly" for the cause, sometimes *qatal*, "kill"; the two are here often synonyms. The noun *jihād* is practically "sacred war."

Moslems or to pay tribute. This order contemplated Arabia only, but embassies were sent to the emperor Heraclius, the king of Persia, the governor of Egypt, the Persian viceroy of Yemen, and the Negus of Abyssinia, calling on them to embrace Islam, and under the first califs Syria, Egypt, and Persia were attacked and conquered. The question has arisen whether or not the Koran requires Moslems to attack all non-moslem peoples and force them to accept the faith or pay tribute. Moslem jurists have generally decided this question in the affirmative, but political relations have decided it otherwise. Moslem rulers have been governed by the ordinary human desire for power and by the regulations of war that have been agreed on among civilized nations. The sultan of Turkey (who, as calif, is the ecclesiastical head of the Moslem world) is simply one ruler among many, and must conduct negotiations like any unbeliever. This, then, is a case where the exegesis of a sacred book has been determined by political conditions.

Increase of luxury and non-koranic superstition in the Moslem world occasioned movements of reform, particularly in Africa and Arabia. The Berbers of the Maghreb, an intellectually dull but emotionally excitable people, incapable of apprehending the finer side of the teaching of the Koran, were zealots for the letter of law; they felt lost without visible supernatural guidance, and readily followed men who proved themselves holy by the rigidity of their obedience to ritual and by their ascetic observances. In the eleventh century the Morabits[62] (Almoravides), under such guidance, undertook to do away with excessive official taxes and other customs not sanctioned by the Koran. They ruled for a time in Morocco and southern Spain, but succumbed to the corrupting influences of their position, and in the twelfth century were crushed and followed by the Mowahhids, or Mohads (Almohades), who maintained the unity of God against the low forms of saint-worship that then prevailed.[63] The most important attempt

[62] This term has come into English in the French form *marabout*.

[63] It is noteworthy that these unitarian Berbers, affected by the culture of Moslem Spain, became patrons of learning, especially of philosophy. It must be added, in justice to the Berbers, that in the fourteenth century they produced Ibn Ḫaldun, the greatest of the Moslem historians.

at reform was that of the Arabian Wahhabis, who in the eighteenth century instituted a vigorous crusade against luxury (silks, satins, and tobacco) and saint-worship, and advocated an uncompromising literalism; they still exist in Arabia and India, but have lost their power as an organization. While these movements produced no new doctrine, they show the vitality of the Koran as a guide of religious life.

Persia has been the home of doctrinal reinterpretations of the sacred book of Islam. Partly by accidental historical relations, but mainly through native tendencies and the influences of foreign thought, she has continued for twelve centuries to construct at intervals systems and forms of religion which, assuming to rest on the Koran, introduce conceptions that are to a greater or less extent alien to those of Mohammed and his people. The prophet bitterly denounced the worship of any being but Allah, he had, apparently, never heard of the idea of the incarnation of God, his temperament was distinctly not ascetic or mystical, and he was at the farthest possible remove from a philosophical construction of the world; yet all these things found acceptance among certain of his followers.

The peculiar position of the fourth calif, Ali (Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law), led a large body of the Persian Moslems (the Shiite sect) to regard him as the only legitimate successor of the prophet in the headship of Islam, and Aryan thought divinized him and Mohammed and paid them divine worship. The headship of Ali was continued in the imams (leaders) who followed him, and the seventh (or twelfth) of these was to be the Mahdi ("he who is divinely directed") and to introduce the universal and final religion. One branch of this sect, the Ismailic, organized one of the most remarkable systems of propaganda that the world has ever seen, and promulgated in the name of the prophet doctrines of incarnation, inspiration, and freedom from the rules of morality that completely extinguished the teaching of the Koran. Passing into Africa, the Ismailians established the Fatimide dynasty in Egypt, and the mad calif Hakim (996–1021) was hailed as an incarnation of God and became the centre of the religion of the Druses.

In the opposite direction from this demand for incarnate super-

natural guidance was the cultivation of philosophy, introduced to the Moslem world in the ninth century by translations of Greek works, and pursued with great zeal in Bagdad, Cordova, and elsewhere. The Moslem philosophers eliminated local and anthropomorphic features from the Koran, maintained the freedom of the will, denied that the Koran was eternal, and in general rationalized religion. A protest against such reliance on human reason was made by the mystics (sufis, fakirs, dervishes), who found the basis of religious faith in the experiences of the soul.[64] Man, it was held, might come to an immediate perception of God, would be freed from the burden of dependence on external authority (including that of the prophet), and would become in essence a part of the divine nature. The more intellectually and morally refined mystics (of whom Al-Ghazzali was the most eminent) sought to find sanction for their view in the Koran while ignoring almost completely its conception of religion.

In recent times contact with European thought has led many devout Moslems to what is really a reconstruction of Islam. The cruder elements of the Koran are discarded, its conception of Allah and its eschatology are purified, the character of Mohammed is idealized, and in general Islam is made into what is regarded as a perfect system of religious thought. In such reconstructions, as in the cases mentioned above, the believer holds fast to his loyalty to the Koran. In some eclectic systems, as in Bahaism (an offshoot of Babism) and in the quasi-universal scheme of the Panjab Messiah, the Koran, though not considered supreme, is given a leading or eminent place. The Moslem world at large is indifferent to puritanical reforms and rationalistic and philosophical speculations. Its religion is simply the religion of the Koran—that is, with many heathen survivals, crudities, and inconcinnities, it believes in the sole sovereignty of Allah and the practical infallibility of Mohammed, and this belief is a bond of religious (but not of political) union.

[64] The separate existence of the soul as an entity is assumed in the Koran, but there is no discussion or explanation of its nature and powers, or of its relation to the body.

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THE PRIESTLY FUNCTION IN THE MODERN CHURCH

W. ELLSWORTH LAWSON

Oakland, California

It is not with conceit but by constraint that one ventures to write on the priestly function in the modern church. Can anything new be said about it? Can anything be said at all without wounding the sensibilities and adding to the burdens—already too heavy—of the modern minister? Criticism there must be, construction there ought to be, in any discussion of this subject. But both criticism and construction will be inevitably and deeply affected by the temperament of the writer. So at the outset you are asked to believe that, however dogmatic this discussion may at times appear, it is carried on in the perfect awareness that there is another side to most of the questions that will arise, and that excuses and even justifications may be urged for some of the tendencies upon which those who have cultivated a religious scrupulousness in such matters look with increasing dismay.

I

Throughout the long history of mankind two types of men have confronted each other: the priest and the prophet. They have not always understood each other, and sometimes they have been in open and violent antagonism. Historically, they stand for contrasted, though not necessarily for contradictory, ideals of life. The priest, as the divinely endowed administrator of the grace of God, has always feared and many times hated the prophet with his direct appeal to the free spirit, the questioning intellect, and the active conscience of the individual. To the priest, as above defined, God is always mediated, and the thought of an immediate experience of the Eternal Spirit in the soul is the rankest sort of blasphemy. Always it is God *and* something other: God and the symbol, God and the institution, God and the celebrant himself. Absolving penitents, offering sacrifices, imper-

sonating Deity, boldly taking upon himself holy functions which in the New Testament are either concentrated uniquely in Jesus Christ or diffused throughout the church universal, the priest has exerted a blighting influence upon the church for centuries. The enemy of true religion, the subverter of true morality, the destroyer of all liberty, the caricature of the Christian minister where ministry is most divine—that is the priest as history largely reveals him, and that is the figure that rises spontaneously in our minds whenever we hear the word mentioned.

But there is another and a higher sense in which the word may be used of a man. There are certain tender, winsome, sensitive natures that work upon and within our social life, men who seem to carry about with them an atmosphere of peace and consolation, and sweet reasonableness, men whose strength is as the strength of ten because their hearts are pure, men whose ministry is truly sacramental and whose very presence in the church and in society is an abiding benediction. It is with these men (or with the creation of them), and not with the priest in the historic sense, that this discussion concerns itself. In them lie the salvation of the church and the hope of the world. If ever the day should dawn when we no longer expect or desire such priestly personalities either in our pulpits or our pews, then surely the final shame will have fallen upon our churches. For, as Dr. William Adams Brown reminds us, "the Christian ideal is not that of a society in which there are no priests, but one in which priesthood is a universal experience, each man bearing his neighbor's need upon his heart, and unsparingly giving himself for his salvation."

Here, then, however much it may mock and scourge us, is the personal ideal we should ever cherish, and toward which we should ever move. And what, after all, is this but the ideal of the Apostle Peter whose noble, inspiring words should be read in the hearing of the people at least once every year: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II

Now, apart from the sublime truth of the universal priesthood of all believers, the modern minister has still a peculiarly priestly function in the church in that he is the director of the visible forms of church life, the chief officer of the church as organized for the public worship of God. It is in the discussion of this that your sympathetic consideration is asked, for the task is far from being a pleasant one.

It may be remembered that when Cicero, to escape the vengeance of Clodius, voluntarily exiled himself from Rome, he crossed over into Greece and lived for a while in Thessalonica. One day he looked upon Olympus, where the rapt vision of the ancient Greek had beheld the radiant home of his deities. "But I," said the lofty Cicero, "saw nothing but snow and ice." It may be that you who read this will say: "Here is one who has looked upon the church with the same disillusioned and unpoetical eyes with which Cicero gazed upon Olympus." But it is not so. The church remains to me in a very peculiar sense the house of God and the gate of Heaven. Yet there are certain tendencies in the church life of today which cause one the greatest uneasiness, and which appear to indicate that we are in peril of making the church a house of Pleasure and a gate of the World. It is these tendencies which cry aloud for the restoration of the priestly function in our churches.

We have denied, and rightly, the special sacredness of institutions, of ceremonies, of *things* considered only in themselves; but in our iconoclastic zeal have we not almost lost the consciousness of the profound sacredness of life itself, and of the needy human spirit in the midst of life? It is a perfectly legitimate question of our day to ask if we have not forgotten how to lead the soul into the holy of holies where all its perplexities are stilled and all its needs supplied. The modern vice of egotism has put forth its last poisonous flower—irreverence; and its evil odor, sometimes even the blossom itself, has invaded the place of worship. "The decay of reverence" has become a cant phrase of the times. Both our religious and secular press exploit the phrase in a continual procession of depressing paragraphs. What is so

universally acknowledged must be a condition, and not a mere creation of the journalistic fancy. As a condition, then, it must be faced with what of courage yet remains in us.

It was prophesied of the Servant of Yahveh that, when he should come, he would "not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the streets." That is to say, there would be nothing violent, nor hysterical, nor corybantic, nor of the wild dervish in his methods. How one hears the swift condemnation of many of our modern church manners in those ancient words! The straining after screaming titles for our sermonettes; the emphasis we lay on the wrong things in our church calendars; the "special features"; the extra special Sunday-night affair which with a pathetic sacrilegiousness we hope will catch the eye or ear of restless, volatile people; the vices of hysterical advertising which we have allowed to mar the simplicity and grandeur of our vocation; the enervating habit, caught from outsiders, of speaking of the pulpit as though it were a proscenium, and of our services as though they were entertainments—how all these things stand once and for ever condemned in the calm, sane, spiritually dignified method laid down for the Servant of Yahveh! "He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the streets." No! for that is the method of the theatre, of the music hall, of the pulpit mountebank. It was the method of the false prophets before the exile, and has been the method of every false prophet since. Not so worked the Son of Man, the preacher of righteousness, the High Priest of our confession—even Jesus.

The worst feature of all these things is that they are flagrant violations of the divine purpose for which the church exists, and help foster the restlessness of soul, the irresponsibility of mind, the love of sensation, and the spirit of ego-indulgence which are the curse in all departments of modern life, and which in the highest department of all—that of collective worship—has resulted in a loss of reverence, of decorum, and occasionally even of decency, until there is sometimes little to distinguish the worship in church from a public meeting of any kind. The whispering, chattering, jolly congregation; the fidgety, flashy, self-complacent choir; the lounging, slovenly priest praying with one hand in his pocket; the bustling impresario who, for an awful moment,

has donned the robe of a priest—how far are these a caricature of the truth, and how much of truth gleams through the caricature?

It is the glory of our free churches that the ministers are granted a large freedom in the conduct of public worship. It is, however, a glory that carries with it a continual and perilous temptation. And the time has fully come to answer the question quite definitely whether the church is a social club whose members gather weekly to discuss their social engagements, hear some good or indifferent music and a lecture on anything from pseudo-psychotherapy to the morals of polar bears; or whether it is, indeed, the one Holy Place on earth where men and women come together in soberness and joy, in penitence and prayer, to worship and adore the Holy Father.

III

It is to this that we now turn. The position maintained here is that the church is not for the purpose of entertainment, however high the quality of the entertainment may be, nor yet for the sole purpose of instruction, though that has a very noble place therein. The church is primarily for the purpose of worship, of adoration, of spiritual fellowship.

Here is the one positive need of the soul in these days to which the church must minister or cease to exist. As ministers, we can, if we choose, play baseball with our young men, run competitive "socials," manage boys' clubs, and by painful ingenuity keep up the other extra activities which a feverish church life forces upon us. We can also, if we choose, give them little moral lectures on love, courtship, marriage, and such like popularities. Perhaps all these things are very good. But can we, and do we, lead the ecclesiastically petted and flattered young people of our churches up the spiritual stairway of life to the heights where God is seen in his holiness, and felt in his grace, and known in his power? Unless we do this, and do it with unfaltering courage and persistency, the essential triviality of those other things will creep into our very acts of worship, and the hours which should be the consecration of accomplished work and the inspiration for future effort, will neither satisfy the souls of the people, nor confirm their faith, nor strengthen their will.

Adoration is not a luxury, neither is it—as Professor Carver so curiously reiterates in his pragmatic vision of *The Religion Worth Having*—a mere gratification of the aesthetic instinct. It is not an extra added to the common life of mankind, a life which would be just as beautiful, just as helpful, and just as inspiring without it. No! Worship is the necessity of man's being, something which belongs to him as a child of the Most High, something without which he cannot complete himself, but must remain through all his days a creature with starved instincts, narrow vision, and pathetic impotence.

The ideal of a church service, then, is that it should be the collective expression in acts of worship of the life of God in the soul of man. That ideal is fulfilled when men and women are made thrillingly aware of the presence of the eternal God in their own souls and in the souls of their fellow-worshippers. It is said that on the pedestal of the image of an Egyptian goddess these words were carved: "No mortal ever removed my veil." It is the function of the modern priest, as the leader of public worship, to draw aside the veil, to enable men and women worn by the fierce attritions of the world, weary and faint in the perpetual struggle with passions within and without them, to see the vision of God in their midst; of God the comforter, of God the redeemer, of God the continual inspirer of faith and works.

How, then, are we to recover and maintain the atmosphere of worship in our churches? Only, one may say, by a more severe attention to a multitude of details which we are in danger of neglecting. Will it do, for example, to speak of so simple, and to some minds so trivial, a matter as one's appearance in the pulpit? If he choose, the prophet may come to us clothed in camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins, and with sandals upon his feet. But the prophet-priest must observe the common decencies of civilized life, if he would lead his people up the heights. He may wear a gown or discard it, he may fasten his collar in front or behind—these are things of personal preference—but the eternal fitness of things demands that he be soberly clothed. Some attention also he will give to the appearance of the choir behind him. He may prefer that the choir be vested. It is not a vital matter. But this is vital, that the picture-hat and the flaming

blouse be banished from the choir loft. A giddily costumed choir clustering about the organ and a sharp business-looking master of ceremonies in the pulpit present at the outset very serious obstacles to the attainment of a reverential mood. And is it too much to hope that the time draws near when not only the choir but the whole body of worshippers shall appear bareheaded in the house of God?

Now the most important moments of public worship are the first five and the last two. Of what avail are a decorously clothed choir and a beautiful order of service, if the preacher himself be not a priestly person, aware of the solemnity and responsibility of his position? A lady told the writer recently of an experience which he would hope is not representative. Seated in church before the service began, the stillness of the waiting congregation impressed her, and a sense of reverence filled her soul. By and by the choir, a vested one, filed silently in. A moment afterward the minister came bustling in, bent for a flying instant over the pulpit, then announced a hymn in a loud voice. "Let everybody sing," he cried cheerily, "sing heartily; make it go." *And it went.* But with it went also every feeling of reverence from that woman's soul. Now one would not like to believe that this preacher even suspected that he was irreverent. He may only have been possessed with a disquieting fear of dulness. But dulness and reverence are not synonymous terms. If, instead of the first voice in that service being the preacher's, it had been the united voice of the church singing unannounced the strains of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," the sense of worship would have been retained and intensified, and it might have spread its inspiring influence over every detail of that service. Then those unutterably solemn moments when the minister of God pronounces the tender, exquisite words of the benediction—how careful one should be that no suspicion of haste or formality be permitted! Much may be forgiven us by our patient congregations, but for slovenliness and irreverence here no forgiveness is possible.

I can touch but lightly on the vexed question of the enrichment of worship. In our righteous revolt against the lifeless formalism of the past and the sacramental ideas imported into the liturgical forms of worship, we have dropped some things which

might now with considerable advantage be restored. A great gain of reverence would ensue from the addition of printed prayers and responsive sentences. These should of course be brief. The whole opening service need not occupy more than nine or ten minutes, but in those minutes the mind of the congregation would be drawn away from trivial and disturbing things and fixed upon the idea of worship; and there would be created that sense of oneness between preacher and people which is so necessary for the achievement of the highest ends for which we labor and pray. This, of course, is merely a suggestion. But it is a growing conviction of many that something must be done—things being as they are—to calm the mind and to create the consciousness of a common spiritual heritage in the restless, feverish beings who come to church for they scarcely know what. And it is only when this unity of feeling in worship is reached that the minister's special message can produce its deepest and most enduring effect.

Of that special message this is not the time to write. But there is surely a priestly function for the sermon also to fulfil. God hath committed unto us a ministry of reconciliation; how can this reconciliation be effected save as the consciousness of the holy Father's presence be deepened and not dissipated by the personal message of the preacher? Sometimes the prophet, overwhelmed with the greatness of his vocation, absorbed in the exalted ideals and ideas which thrill his own soul, or stirred to the finest fibre of his being with the fervor of his moral vision, forgets the sore hearts, the perplexed minds, and the weary bodies before him. The thing he has to say seems so momentous to him that he forgets that it is not only the word of God but God himself that we must recognize, if we would go from the church healed and strong and bravely ambitious in the things of the spirit. He beholds the strength and the glory of God, but not the weakness and need of men. Here, then, the human insight and tender sympathy of the true priest, as the atmosphere through which the prophet's message reaches men, is the supreme need of our day.

There is one great priestly function of which something should be said, for surely it is the highest of all. We are not always in

church, we have a great and very difficult private ministry. From childhood to old age, in all the crises of our people's lives, we have a place to fill which cannot be paralleled by any other class of the world's workers. What perplexities, what misfortunes, what griefs, what bitter shames are laid before us! And what the soul needs then is not eloquence, not brilliant scholarship, not dazzling social gifts, not even the passionate message of the prophet, but just the wise and tender heart. How many of us have failed just here! It is a bitter memory. For this private ministry of consolation and guidance nothing but the highest qualities of the true priest can suffice. Let us seek them anew in penitence and prayer.

Priesthood, then, as here so inadequately outlined, has nothing official about it. It is a priesthood not of gross and impertinent ecclesiasticism, but of consecrated personality. It is, indeed, as Dr. Denney somewhere calls it, "an element and function of Sonship," and only as such can it have any meaning at all. Here lies the problem of liturgical and non-liturgical churches alike. Liturgy availeth nothing, nor free prayer, nor free speech; but the character of the soul who reads and prays and speaks. We are discovering that the one supreme evil in the leadership of public worship is the irreverent mind, the unprepared heart, the undisciplined will. We fear the actor in the pulpit, the man bent upon impressing men with the exuberance of his eloquence, the sprightliness of his enthusiasms, the facility of his modernness. We fear the entertainer behind the altar, the irresponsible soul who has no high sense of his vocation, whose ministrations have no consolation in them, and whose presence has no abiding strength and inspiration.

Who is sufficient for these things? That must ever be our cry if we know ourselves. And so it is for the priestly *life* that we should incessantly pray and strive. We cannot lead the people into the holy of holies unless we ourselves habitually enter therein. We can only inspire men by the magic of superior spirit. The exaltation of the prophet may, indeed, be the creation of the moment's high vision; but the genuinely priestly spirit can only be the ultimate flower of the sacramental life.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMOTION IN RELIGION

JAMES H. LEUBA
Bryn Mawr College

I

It is held by many that religion had its origin in the emotional life, in "loving reverence," or in fear, or in awe; and many make some particular emotion the distinguishing mark of religion. Since, indeed, religion is a part of the struggle for the preservation and perfection of life, it involves from the very beginning emotional states. But to speak of religion as originating in emotions is to assume a conception of religion which seems to me utterly unacceptable. If any sentiment or emotion, such as reverence or fear or awe, is found at the dawn of religion, it exists as part of the response, in a particular situation, to a sense of the presence of an invisible Being, upon whom one depends and with whom one desires to hold satisfactory relations. The emotion belongs to an experience involving the whole man, that is, man as a feeling, thinking, willing being.

The first question, then, that I desire to raise is not, "In what emotion does religion originate?" but, "What is the dominant emotion at the beginning of religious life?" Let us first consider the question *a priori*. What are the emotions which even the most primitive savage is likely to have as he feels the invisible presence of his great tribal ancestors, of mighty nature-beings, of creators? Fear these he certainly does. If he believes himself able by magic to coerce any one of them, his attitude towards that one is self-assertion, self-reliance, and pride, perhaps even arrogance, mitigated no doubt by a lurking fear that his magic may fail. But such a relation to a spirit or god does not constitute religion; it is, as we know, magic. If, on the other hand, he finds himself in a personal, anthropopathic relation with one of these unseen beings, and, realizing his need, seeks to win the god's favor with presents or by bowing before him in an attitude of fear, respect, and hope, we have an altogether different emotional attitude. The man is no longer self-assertive and proud.

A sense of subjection is present, together with fear, either as pure fear, or as that higher emotion derived from fear and curiosity —awe. There may be, in addition, something belonging to the opposite end of the emotional gamut,—something approaching the tender emotions. If this should seem to endow primitive man with feelings beyond him, I would answer that we owe to our animal ancestry not only the instincts and emotions of fear, of self-assertiveness and its opposite, but also those simpler forms of the tender emotions which appear in the parental relations of the higher animals and in the attachment of certain of our domestic animals to their masters. Why, then, should we be unwilling to attribute to the most primitive savage a degree of tender regard for his Great Ancestor or for his Creator? The first group of human beings need not be imagined as either bloodthirsty brutes, incapable of anything but violence and cruelty, or abject, timorous creatures, familiar only with fear. The lowest men we know do not at all answer to either description. There is among them kindness, mutual consideration, and even real affection. This is what we should expect of primitive man, if he had inherited the best in his animal ancestry. Shall we add gratitude to the list of original religious emotions? Young children have the reputation of being thankless, and savages show the same trait. Gratitude is not a simple primary emotion, as are fear, self-assertion, self-subjection, and the tender emotions. Nevertheless, I do not see why some degree of gratitude should not, even at the beginning, mix with the other emotions. If the gods are regarded as in some degree benevolent, then one has a right to expect expressions of gratitude towards them when they have fulfilled the desires of their dependants.

The oldest and probably most widely accepted opinion is that fear led to religion. Hume's conclusion, that "the first ideas of religion arose . . . from a concern with regard to the events of life and fears which actuate the human mind," is maintained by most of our contemporaries. Among psychologists, Ribot, for instance, affirms that "the religious sentiment is composed . . . first of all of the emotion of fear in its different degrees, from profound terror to vague uneasiness, due to faith in an unknown, mysterious, impalpable Power." [1] The sway of fear at the dawn

[1] Th. Ribot, The Psychology of the Emotions, p. 309.

of human existence is a well-established fact. It is probable that evil spirits were the first to receive particular attention. "Among the Bongos of central Africa 'good spirits are quite unrecognized, and, according to the general negro idea, no benefit can ever come from a spirit.'" [2] In other tribes good spirits are known, but the savage always "pays more attention to deprecating the wrath of the evil than securing the favor of the good beings." The tendency is to let the good spirits alone, because they will do us good of themselves.

But though fear is the most conspicuous emotion of primitive religious life, it is not the only one present, and there is no quality in fear that fits it to be called the original religious emotion.[3] The making of religion requires nothing found in fear that is not present also in the other emotions. If tender emotions are not prominent at the dawn of religion, it is only because fear is the first of the well-organized emotional reactions, and biologically at first the most valuable. It antedates the human species and today appears first in the infant as well as in the young animal. In early human existence it was kept in the foreground by the circumstances of existence. No doubt before the protective fear-reaction could be established, the lust of life had begun to express itself in aggressive habits,—for instance, the habit of securing food. But these desires did not, as early as in the case of fear, give rise to any emotional reaction as constant, definite, and poignant as fear. The place of fear in primitive religion is, then, due not to its intrinsic qualities, but simply to the circumstances which made it appear first as a well-organized emotion, vitally

[2] Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock), The Origin of Civilization, 5th ed., 1892, p. 225.

[3] R. R. Marett, in an essay entitled "Pre-Animistic Religion," gives expression to an interesting view of the original religious emotion. "Before, or at any rate apart from, Animism, was any man subject to any experience, whether in the form of feeling, or of thought, or of both combined, that might be termed specifically 'religious'?" His answer is affirmative; the emotion arising in the presence of the mysterious—awe—is the original religous emotion. "Of all English words, Awe is, I think, the one that expresses the fundamental religious feeling most nearly. Awe is not the same thing as 'pure funk.' 'Primus in orbe deos fecit timor' is only true if we admit Wonder, Admiration, Interest, Respect, even Love, perhaps, to be, no less than Fear, essential constituents of this elemental mood" (The Threshold of Religion, 1909, pp. 8, 13).

connected with the maintenance of life. It is for exactly the same reason that the dominant emotion in the relations of uncivilized men and of animals toward strangers is usually fear.

Nevertheless there does not seem to be anything preposterous in the supposition that groups of primitive men found themselves in circumstances so favorable to peace and safety that fear did not occupy the foremost place. Neither wild men nor wild animals need have found themselves so situated as to be in a constant state of fright. If the African antelope runs for its life twice a day on an average, as Galton supposes, the wild horse on the South American plains, before the hunter had appeared in his pastures, ran chiefly for pleasure. Travellers bear testimony to the absence of fear in birds and animals inhabiting certain regions. But, it may be asked, would religion have come into existence under these peaceful conditions? A life of ease, comfort, and security is not conducive to the establishment of practical relations with gods. History teaches us that in times of prosperity men forget their gods. Why should happy, self-sufficient men look to unseen, mysterious beings for assistance? Under such circumstances the unmixed type of fear-religion would never have come into existence. Religion would have appeared late, and, from the first, in a nobler form. It would have been characterized by a feeling of dependence upon Creators and All-fathers regarded as benevolent gods, and would have elicited primarily awe and reverence.

W. Robertson Smith denies that the attempt to appease evil beings is the foundation of religion. "From the earliest times religion, as distinct from magic or sorcery, addresses itself to kindred and friendly beings, who may indeed be angry with their people for a time, but are always placable except to the enemies of their worshippers or to renegade members of the community. It is not with a vague fear of unknown powers, but with a loving reverence for known gods who are knit to their worshippers by strong bonds of kinship, that religion, in the only sense of the word, begins." [4] He does not deny that certain practices intended to avert the action of evil spirits preceded the establishment of

[4] W. Robertson Smith, The Religion of the Semites, p. 55.

affectionate relations with benevolent powers, but declares that the attempt to propitiate dreaded evil spirits is not religion.

Can this limitation of the meaning of religion be accepted? When a person seeks to conciliate an evil being, his feelings and his behavior are undoubtedly very different from his experience when he communes with a benevolent being. Yet in both cases an anthropopathic relation with a personal being is established. In this respect both stand opposed to magical behavior. This common anthropopathic element is so fundamental that it seems advisable to give both types of relation the name religion. But since they differ in important respects, the term "negative religion" may be used for man's anthropopathic dealings with essentially bad spirits, and "positive religion" for his relations with benevolent gods.

But not even positive religion is at first free from fear. The benevolent gods are quick to anger, and cruelly avenge their broken laws. This is one more reason for not completely dissociating the propitiation of evil spirits from the worship of kindly gods.

II

Origins are interesting chiefly because of the light they shed upon the present and the future. In order to give that light its fullest illuminating power, the beginnings should be connected with the present by a knowledge of the intervening developments.

One of the most significant facts revealed by a comparison between the earlier and later forms of religion is an emotional progress. It begins with the yielding of fear to its relative, awe, which in its turn is displaced by other emotions in which fear is not merely held in control, as in awe, but is completely overcome. They are reverence, admiration, gratitude, a sense of the sublime, and the tender emotions. In the highest civilization of today, fear, awe, and, to a considerable degree, even reverence have been displaced by the tender emotions, which rule supreme. Fear expresses itself in rejecting or breaking away from its object; the tender emotion, in embracing or accepting its object. The progress of the dominant emotional tone from fear to the tender emotions, passing through awe, reverence, and sublimity, means,

then, the gradual substitution of acceptance, agreement, and union for rejection, disagreement, and separation. The importance of this fact will appear in what follows.

The advance from a negative to a positive reaction is, of course, not the *result* of religion. To take it so would be to put the cart before the horse. Religion is the instrument, not the creator, of human impulses and desires. Whatever the development through which it passes, that which takes place is no more than the manifestation in one realm of life—the religious—of what takes place in life generally. The obviousness of the transformation I have indicated makes a long demonstration unnecessary. A few illustrative facts may, however, be in place. Neither Christ nor Gautama, nor even Mohammed, was actuated by fear. They were, of all men, fearless. But they were in advance of their times. After their death their religions, founded upon a plane far above the lives of their contemporaries, were degraded to the level of the period,—a level so low that even in the Christian era fear is found entrenched as the predominant religious force. For those acquainted with history, the mention of the Dark Ages, when cruelty and dread sounded the leading notes in the tumultuous dramas in which the church of Rome frequently played a chief part, will be a sufficient reminder of the potency of fear in those times. After the great Protestant schism, fear remained for another long period the preponderant emotion in the life of most Christian bodies. Predestination, together with the belief in hell, was made an instrument of terror. Nowhere was the dread awfulness of God more seriously realized than among the Jansenists of Port Royal. The brothers Antoine Lemaistre and Isaac Lemaistre de Saci, and Pascal, three of their great leaders, were brought to God chiefly through fear.[5] What Fontaine says of de Saci, in the *Mémoires* quoted by Sainte-Beuve, could perhaps have been asserted with equal truth of all the noble men who directed the movement. "Those who have said after his death that the fear of the Lord had filled him, have made a true portrait of him." "The chaste fear of God and respect for His infinite grandeur so possessed him that he was in

[5] Sainte-Beuve, Port Royal, vol. i, pp. 378–380, 33; vol. ii, pp. 328, 502 ff. Comp. Histoire de M. M. Alacoque, 10th ed., pp. 124–125.

His presence as in a continual tremor of fear." The great movement started by John Wesley was also fed by fear, as is sufficiently attested by the terrifying eloquence of its most distinguished disciples. Even the society that took the peaceful name of "Friends" was not at the beginning free from fear.

The change that has come over the Christian world with regard to fear is reflected in the altered emotional tone of religious revivals. In all revivals earlier than the present generation one of the chief instruments was fear,—fear of God's wrath, fear of wretchedness in this life, fear of torments hereafter. It was common for people "under conviction of sin" to be so frightened that they would "throw themselves on the ground and roar with anguish." The terrifying method was carried so far that a few ministers made an effort to soften the preaching. Jonathan Edwards, however, thought that "speaking terror to them that are already under great terrors, instead of comforting them" is to be commended if done with the intention of bringing more light. He complains of the weakness of those who shrink from throwing children into ecstasies of fear with talk of hell-fire and eternal damnation. "But if those who complain so loudly of this," he remarks, "really believe what is the general profession of the country, viz., that all are by nature the children of wrath and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed, every moment, to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God; I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this betrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers and are infinitely more hateful than vipers and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons."[6] This appeal to fear of a hun-

[6] Jonathan Edwards, Thoughts on the Revival of Religion (1832), p. 203. The terrifying nature of Edwards's sermons is indicated by such titles as The Eternity of Hell Torments, The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. In the last is found the following famous passage: "The God that holds you over the pit of Hell, much as we hold a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath toward you burns like fire. He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight. You are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most

dred years ago is rare today. The evangelist Moody[7] had little to say about hell and the wrath of God, and a great deal about heaven and the love of Christ. In the latest of great revivals, the Welsh revival, the meetings were pitched in the key of the tender emotions. "The burden of Evan Roberts's teaching is love and gratitude, obedience and personal service and joy." [8] The practices of the Salvation Army show that even in the lower strata of society fear has fallen into disuse as a religious tool. If this is true of the uneducated part of our population, it is even more marked among the educated. Christ is best known to our prosperous church-goers as a compassionate Son of Man, healing the sick and comforting the wayward. The hissing of threats and maledictions has given place to the singing of the Son's redeeming love and of the delights of beulah-land.

One must, however, make two qualifications to this statement. At all times the spirit of Christ has here and there been repre-

hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. . . . There is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into Hell since you arose this morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to Hell since you sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful, wicked manner of attending to his solemn worship."

Finney was of Edwards's mind. "Without pity or abatement he appealed to the selfish emotion of fear. He held that whoever comforts the sinner does him an injury 'as cruel as the grave, as cruel as hell,' for it is calculated to send him headlong to the abyss of everlasting fire" (F. M. Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals, p. 193).

"Impassioned appeals to terror were uncommon with Wesley" (ibid., p. 167), yet he believed in everlasting torment for the wicked, and at times made fearful pictures of what awaited unrepentant sinners. If Wesley did not go so far as Edwards in "preaching terror," some of his followers did. "No community ever saw more terrible scenes of mental and nervous disorder than are described in the Journal as having occurred under the preaching of one Berridge and one Hicks in the vicinity of Everton, almost under the shadow of the University of Cambridge" (ibid., p. 171).

[7] "With Moody, religious evangelism was emancipation from the horrid spectres of irrational fear. I do not mean that he was blind to the natural law of retribution. . . . There was no thoughtless optimism about his preaching of divine justice. But the old emphasis was completely changed. Moody's favorite theme was the love of the Heavenly Father. He believed that the lash of terror is for slaves and not for the free born of Almighty God" (F. M. Davenport, op. cit., p. 204).

[8] A. T. Fryer, "Psychological Aspects of the Welsh Revival 1904–5," Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, vol. xix, 1905, p. 92.

sented in all its gentleness. There have always been rare men like Francis of Assisi and Fénelon to bear witness to the struggle between the spirit of fear and the spirit of love. Moreover, the cruder attitude is still occasionally met with, chiefly among the less intelligent.

A few years ago I circulated a *questionnaire* on several phases of religion, especially upon its impulses and motives. The three hundred answers received were in many cases supplemented by personal correspondence. Inadequate as these answers are for statistical purposes, they are valuable as "qualitative" information concerning the religious attitude of our contemporaries. They reflect strikingly the new temper. Fear is of so little significance in their religious life that its removal would make practically no difference, except in the case of two of them, an elderly French clergyman and a young law student. The former wrote as follows:

> I feel very much that my letter will disappoint you. The feeling of divine justice and of its exigencies has much weakened in pious persons. In me it has continually grown stronger. The principles are neglected and sentimentality is put in their place. Moreover, I have suffered dreadfully, physically and morally; the history of Job is constantly present to my mind. I have seen the evil spirits at work trying to injure me. I have seen Satan displaying his utmost ingenuity to make me suffer the inexpressible. You will therefore readily understand that my usual mood is not one of superficial light-heartedness, that I cannot be an optimist in the common acceptation of the word. I believe that the just man will be saved,—without that certitude there can be but despair and death,—but he is to be saved painfully, as by fire. . . . I am moved to religious practices by a feeling of duty and to appease the wrath of God which rises against sinful humanity. . . . For many people the most characteristic religious experience is the feeling of God's love, of his goodness, compassion, and readiness to succor those who call upon him. I would not say that this is false, but its one-sidedness brings it near to being false. . . . My experience is that man being sinful must suffer, suffer much, drink also of the bitter cup of Jesus Christ. In my religious exercises, I always experience fear towards the Holy God, who must inexorably avenge his broken law and his majesty outraged by sin.[9]

[9] Reprinted from "The Contents of Religious Consciousness," Monist, vol. xi, 1901, pp. 563–564.

The law student (age 23) admits that the circumstances which oftenest affect him religiously are those which frighten him or make him nervous. Fear is with him an emotion easily aroused. Several of his religious practices are kept up chiefly because of a vague fear that harm will befall him if he discontinues. This is true, for instance, of his attendance on Young Men's Christian Association meetings, although he "shrinks" from them. There is "little pleasure and some annoyance in them." He used to read the Bible morning and evening. Lately he has left off the evening chapter because "it wearies him so." "But," he says, "it was a great effort, and I felt the fear for a day or two."

In these two cases of fear-ridden religion—the sole instances that have come to my notice through the *questionnaire*—fear is constitutional. Both men are mild phobiacs, and their natural disposition makes use of obsolete Christian doctrines. The young man knows that he is very nervous and he suspects that his fears are abnormal. "It [the fear] makes me very unhappy even when I am anxious, or at least willing, to do the very thing it prompts me to do. It may be a disease; for I remember that as a mere child it led me into the most absurd habits or tricks. I would feel it my duty to pick up all the loose pieces of glass and china in our home-yard lest some poor barefoot be injured." He knows now, even at the moment the fear is felt, that it is "admittedly groundless, unreasonable, and inconsistent."

In most cases my correspondents have their attention so habitually turned in other directions that, when they write upon the impulses and motives of religious life, they either forget fear or have actually nothing to say about it. When they do mention fear, it is as a rule in general terms; for instance, "fear of danger." A few are more definite. One writes that she would not begin the day without prayer for fear that things in general would go wrong. Another would not dare undertake a railway journey without first securing God's protection. A few mention the fear of death itself, without reference to the beyond, while still others seem not to dread the great crisis so much as the other world.[10]

[10] In his study of conversion Starbuck found that in 14 per cent. of his cases fear of death and hell played a considerable part. His were chiefly adolescent conversions. (The Psychology of Religion, 1899, p. 52.)

The "fear of God" appears more frequently than any other fear. Some describe it as a "reverential fear" or as a "feeling of dependence." In others it bears a more self-regarding stamp. I find only five who seem to have been disturbed at any time by the thought of the hereafter, and of these five, four declare that they have outgrown that youthful stage.[11] In childhood and adolescence it is not unusual for fear to be the principal incentive to religious life. Before reaching the point where we fear sin and remorse extremely but punishment not at all—a height which Harriet Martineau attained at the early age of twenty [12]—there is usually a period during which our religion is prompted by fear of physical suffering and punishment. St. Theresa confesses that it was base fear more than love that prompted her to enter the religious life. Mrs. X., of whom I have written elsewhere,[13] had "no use" for God in her childhood, except when she was frightened. "I do not think I bothered with God when I was a child, except when frightened. Usually I did not care a button for him. I would say my prayers as directed, but automatically. Only, if I got into a plight, I would cling with the completest faith to what I had been taught about God's power and his readiness to answer our prayers."

In the religious experience of my correspondents, fear plays on the whole an exceedingly insignificant rôle. Our contemporaries have the positive attitude. Their virtues and their defects are those of an aggressive, optimistic, and democratic age. It may be, however, that among other classes not fully represented in my *questionnaire*, for instance, among Roman Catholics, fear is more influential.

[11] G. Stanley Hall, in "A Study of Fears," reports that only 11 out of 299 persons who answered his *questionnaire* mention specific fear of hell. (American Journal of Psychology, vol. viii, 1906–7, p. 223.) Scott finds in an inquiry on "Old Age and Death" that 90 per cent. of his correspondents do not mention hell at all. (American Journal of Psychology, vol. viii, 1906–7, p. 104.)

[12] Harriet Martineau, Autobiography, vol. i, p. 31.

[13] J. H. Leuba, "The Personifying Passion in Youth with Remarks upon the Sex and Gender Problem," Monist, vol. x, 1900, p. 547.

See also Th. Flournoy's "Observations de psychologie religieuse," in Archives de psychologie, vol. ii, 1903, Observation II, p. 331.

Let us turn now from the facts to their interpretation. Three causes for the decline of fear are discernible.

(1) At present in civilized society the occasions for fear have become relatively few. The dangers to which men were formerly exposed have almost ceased to exist. Wild beasts, human enemies, and the horrors of war are for most of us only imaginary experiences. It was not so in New England at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Then the conditions of life were favorable for the spread of the harsh Calvinistic beliefs. Conflicts with unsubdued nature and with savage Indians kept the fear-reaction uppermost. The tender emotions could hardly thrive where one went to church with a gun on the shoulder and divided one's attention between worship and the expectation of war-whoops. Speaking of the Edwardian revivals, Davenport says: "I think it may be said that no such effects as are there visible could have been produced, even with the aid of the shocking appeals to terror employed by the preachers of that period, if there had not been in the population a tremendous amount of latent fear."

The causes of fear which have not been removed by civilization,—the celestial bodies, thunder, lightning—have lost much of their terrifying power; for they are now understood and partly mastered. At any rate, eclipses, comets, tornadoes, and electric storms are to us physical phenomena. In a study of fear among children, I find the following: "The director of the school and his assistants, after having considered the question, agreed in saying that they had never discovered in the children the least sign of fear." Another teacher made the same declaration, in words that deserve to be repeated: "I have never noticed fear in my pupils. What should they fear? Their master? We are not in that age. Their school? That is made as pleasant as possible. Their work? They are amused while being taught. Their punishments? They are so light and so infrequent! No, rightly or wrongly, the children of today fear nothing; at least the feeling of fear has no occasion to manifest itself during school-time." [14]

[14] A. Binet, "La peur chez les enfants," Année psychologique, vol. ii, 1895, pp. 224–225.

(2) The fear-reaction is falling into disuse not only because of a lack of proper stimuli, but also because modern intellectual and moral education produces an increased capacity for converting emotional stimuli into controlled reactions. Reflection and attention are natural enemies of emotional reactions. They engender a habit of self-possession: the more reflective and attentive, the less emotional.

(3) The fundamental cause of the decline of fear is, however, neither knowledge of the physical world nor mental training, but the recognition of the inadequacy of fear as a method of meeting danger. Without entering into a detailed examination of the defects of the hereditary fear-reaction, we may note that it meets each and every danger in the same manner. It is an instinctive tendency to run away from the source of danger, a tendency which, it must be noted, is accompanied by a scattering of the wits. When violent, it brings about a paralysis of the whole voluntary apparatus; it interferes with respiration; it produces spasmodic constriction of the blood-vessels, shiverings, violent spasms of the heart, resulting in pallor and peripheral anaemia. These physiological constituents of the reaction are not altogether without direct or indirect value; for instance, the immobility which they enforce would often be the wisest behavior for the threatened man or animal. Yet this animal fear-reaction is not the only way, nor always the best way, in which an intelligent being, living in highly complex relations, may meet every dangerous situation.

The origin of the fear-reaction accounts for its inadequacy. It arose at a low level of animal life through the natural selection of those chance variations (assisted probably by adaptive habits) which gave an animal an advantage over its fellows. Now the struggle for life does not create improvements; it simply preserves the fittest among the variations blindly produced by nature. The "fittest" is anything, however wretched, which is superior, for the purpose of animal life, to that which previously existed. Natural selection can do no more than preserve the less deficient. The selected improvements have been transmitted to man through generation after generation of animals in the face of rapidly changing circumstances. As a result, man,

with powers of observation and foresight immeasurably superior to those of the animals in which this way of meeting danger was established, still retains the instinct to act in this primitive inadequate fashion. The typical fear-reaction is a survival of a bygone age. "The dominant impression left by such a study" [of fears in children and adolescents], writes Stanley Hall, "is that of the degrading and belittling effects of excessive fears."[15]

This insufficiency of the fear-reaction leads civilized man to struggle against its manifestation. Our instinctive legacy for meeting danger is so evidently deficient that a man in peril struggles as frequently against fear as against its object. In other words, that which was meant to be a means of safety is itself looked upon as a source of danger. A most interesting phase of the powerful mind-cure movement is the war it wages against fear. "Fear," says Horace Fletcher, "is to be placed in the category of harmful, unnecessary, and therefore not respectable things."[16] For these people fear is the Great Sin; it is Satan's new name. Physicians are ready to agree with the more moderate of the Christian Scientists in their impeachment of fear. One physician writes: "When all is said that can be said about the uses of fear, we come to the conclusion that on the whole the sense of danger is a nuisance. Fear is out of date, an anachronism, a vestige, a superannuated and silly servant that has seen better days. . . . We cannot begin to know the meaning of freedom in spiritual life until we have done with it. Until men and women learn that there is nothing about which it is worth while to be anxious, until they put fear aside and look forth upon the world with equanimity and confidence, they cannot exercise a free judgment nor exert a free will." "Generally speaking, the capacity for fear in the human mind is absurdly in excess of its utility."[17]

[15] G. Stanley Hall, "A Study of Fears," American Journal of Psychology, vol. viii, p. 238.

[16] Horace Fletcher, "Happiness as found in Fore-thought minus Fear-thought," Menticulture, Series II.

[17] George R. Wilson, "The Sense of Danger and the Fear of Death," Monist, vol. xiii, 1903, pp. 367, 366.

Civilized man, however, does not strive to be rid of the awareness of danger. What he wants is to be independent of the single, blind, inherited way of meeting every emergency, and to remain in possession of his intellectual and muscular powers, so as to use them judiciously. The goal towards which we are moving is a fearless alertness to physical and moral dangers.

It may seem to some that we have uselessly complicated a simple problem. They might say that, if the influence of fear in religion is waning, it is because we have ceased to believe in terrifying doctrines. When the belief in the judgment, hell, the devil, and an angry God gives way, fear is dethroned. This account would be satisfactory, if the discredit into which these doctrines have fallen were not itself the outcome of the progressive changes I have mentioned as truly as it is the product of the activity of reason exercised directly upon religious ideas. If we no longer believe in hell, it is as much because, being tuned to another key, we are not easily frightened, as because we have come to admit the insufficiency of the proofs for the existence of hell. In the two cases cited above, in which fear held its old sway, the beliefs were supported by a temperament in accord with them. Without this temperamental disposition, they would probably not have believed in the torments of hell. In the early days of New England the conditions of life kept fear in the foreground, hence its dominance in religion. Love agrees better with the contemporary popular temper, and so our judgment is biassed in favor of the doctrines which exhibit the love of God. In regard to these doctrines we are as easily satisfied intellectually as others used to be regarding the fearful doctrines.

The decline of fear in religion is to be ascribed primarily neither to religious influences nor to critical doctrinal studies. Its more profound causes are, as I have said, increased knowledge of the physical universe, intellectual and moral training, and, above all, the realization of the defects of the fear-inheritance. The nature of these causes indicates that the lessening of fear observed in the Christian religion must take place in the religions of all progressive peoples, despite their theologies and creeds. As human nature changes, so do gods and religions change. The effort to readjust our primitive instincts and impulses to the

present altered circumstances is what is meant by the expression "the struggle of the spiritual against the natural man."

Fear gradually yields the place of dominance to awe.[18] In the ancient Greek mysteries, in the old Druidic rites celebrated amid the sombre majesty of forests, in the elaborate ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church, as well as in the plainer forms of worship where simplicity and silence take the place of ornamentation and music, awe constitutes an essential part of the whole emotional impression. Judged by the efforts made to affect the worshippers with awe, this emotional reaction must possess a high religious value. Of what use, then, is awe in religion? One of the services that awe and a sense of the sublime render to religion is to bestow upon it a dignity which fear cannot give. Fear is not an experience of which we may be proud; it is a narrowly utilitarian and unintelligent reaction. In so far as it expresses essential selfishness, it can only discredit religion in the eyes of those who have awakened to the nobility of disinterestedness.

Awe and the sense of the sublime differ from fear in that they do not openly refer to personal needs, neither do they blatantly announce weakness and incapacity. They have no apparently selfish purpose; they have, indeed, no obvious purpose at all. The shudder that creeps over one at the sight of the leaping waters of a cataract is neither selfish nor altruistic; it is disinterested. It is true, however, that the awe-producing aspects of nature all have lurking about them the threat of potential danger.

The value of awe to religion is not only its disinterestedness, —which is a purely negative virtue,—it has a direct ennobling effect. To be impressed by the great, the powerful, the mysterious, and still to be unafraid, is to evince one's partial kinship with these forces. Fear reveals antagonism, enmity, isolation; awe, involving as it does the recognition of greatness without actual fear, gives the first sense of a not unfriendly relation with the cosmos. To feel the power of a thing and at the same time to admire it, as we do in awe, is not only to begin to understand,

[18] See on awe, W. McDougall, Social Psychology, pp. 129–132; on the sublime, Th. Ribot, Psychology of the Emotions, pp. 270, 348–350.

but also to be attracted. The sympathetic vibrations of awe are the first organic sign of a friendship with the cosmic forces, the first step towards that ultimate union with the Great Whole achieved in certain forms of practical mysticism. The thrills of awe are thus enlarging, vitalizing, ennobling.

It should be observed further that there is but a single easy step from awe and sublimity to admiration and reverence. Now in passing from fear through awe to admiration and reverence man advances from the state of a beggar asking for protection to that of a bestower of praises. Since he is bent upon self-respect and self-exaltation, it is not surprising that among the selfish utilitarianisms of the fear-religion he should have seized upon awe and the sublime as redeemers of his religious nature.

However important to religion disinterestedness and the sense of kinship with greatness may be, awe and the sense of the sublime render religion a still greater service by bringing to the mind ideas of superhuman agents, of gods, or of God. Majestic greatness favors a religious rather than a scientific solution of the question of origins; for it suggests an explanation by reference to unseen, personal beings as agents. In reflective, non-emotional moments one might refer natural phenomena to physical forces, while when under the influence of instinctive, emotional reactions, one might interpret the same events in the traditional anthropopathic manner necessary to the historical forms of religion. Emotions absorb attention, arrest the stream of thought, and thus for the moment limit the intellectual range. Even those who have formed in youth the habit of looking upon nature as a mechanism may, when awed or frightened, relapse into an animistic conception. There are persons who in a forest or in a tempest "feel the divine" within them; "something in the stars of the night reaches out" to them. In this way the ever-present animistic tendency crops out and bids us dispense with rational proofs of the existence of God.[19] Any experience awakening a strong emotion is likely to shake off the unstable accretions of rational intelligence, to throw us back upon primitive tendencies, and thus resuscitate ghosts, spirits, and gods. This discrepancy between the god-

[19] Compare William James on the sense of presence, in Varieties of Religious Experience, pp. 58 ff.

ward tendency of our thoughts in certain emotional seizures and their direction when under the guidance of experience indicates on the one hand the progress made by the individual since he discarded animism, and on the other hand the tenacity of the mental habits rooted in a distant past.

When questioned concerning the emotions most conducive to religion, our Protestant contemporaries rarely forget to mention awe and the sense of the sublime. For one who names fear, there are hundreds who single out awe the sense of the sublime, and of the beautiful as potent sources of religious moods and activities.[20] The following selections will illustrate this influence:—

"Mid-ocean, lightning, and thunder inspire me with awe and the sense of dependence and turn my feelings toward God." (No. 8.)

"I can never look up at the stars at night but adoring love and worship fills my soul. The same at early dawn when the beautiful new day comes straight from the hand of God." (No. 39.)

"Formerly it was chiefly a sense of awe and adoration which accompanied religious worship." (No. 51.)

"Places in which the sense of the sublime is appealed to always call forth religious emotions. I have felt this in grand old cathedrals. The last time I noticed the feeling was at the sight of Niagara Falls about two years ago. I had to restrain myself from kneeling down when I first came near the Falls. This feeling was entirely natural, as I had not looked forward to anything but a pleasant admiration of the scene, . . . but am I right in calling this a religious feeling?" ("Quebec.")

[20] Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?

. . . . . .

Who made you glorious as the Gates of Heaven beneath the keen full moon?

. . . . . .

God! Let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God, sing ye meadow streams with gladsome voice!

. . . . . .

And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Coleridge, Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni.

No. 51, who is frequently moved to awe by nature and also by the works of man, writes further: "The same religious feeling I experienced when meditating upon the massiveness of the Brooklyn bridge, and again when I behold such steamships as the St. Paul, Touraine, etc."

No. 37 writes: "I prefer a religious service of much formalism. I have no religious feelings in public except as I am surrounded by the noble in architecture, in colored glass, in the pageantry of the Church. I have knelt at some shrine in walking through the country abroad, with religious feelings, and I have done likewise in some altar in a cathedral. I prefer the Romish worship to any other on this account, but I refrain from having anything to do with it because I think it dangerous to liberty."

Even those who declare themselves without religion often call awe a religious emotion. (For instance, Nos. 51 and 37, quoted above.) Why should they do so unless it be that awe brings to their minds discarded ideas of a Power which, if they believed in him, would be their God?

If the data I have collected show clearly that in Protestant communities men have, as a whole, set their faces away from the dreadful and towards the desirable in religion, they indicate further that the stage of culture at which awe can be the dominant religious emotion is also past. I imagine that the worshippers of Odin and Thor were swayed more by awe than by any other emotion. The Christianity of past centuries knew no better ally, after fear, than awe. But now the awful, as well as the fearful, is losing its power. To be sure, these emotions still retain much of their original power in large portions of the Christian world. The Roman church, for instance, is not ready to dismiss so efficient an agent. Vast cathedrals, majestic music, mysterious rites, gorgeous pageantry, still entrance the faithful, impress the thoughtless, and draw to its spectacles even those indifferent to religion. The terrible they have for the most part outgrown; the awful they have not passed; and the sublime they are using as effectively as possible. In Protestant worship, and especially in the United States, it is somewhat different. Yahveh, who was wont to thunder on the summit of Mount Sinai, in

the presence of whom Moses himself could hardly live, is being displaced by the God of love, before whom not even prodigal sons need tremble. The "new" revelation is a gospel of love: "Children, flowers, fruit-trees,—everything is full of God's love" (No. 39). In church architecture, the comfortable is put before the majestic; in doctrine, the serviceable is preferred to the mysterious; and in the conception of God, the loving is not to be overshadowed by the awful.

The tendency to banish awe as well as fear is evident not only in religion, but in secular life also. The rod is proscribed in home and school; the child is no longer to sit at the feet of the master, but pupil and teacher are to work arm in arm as becomes good friends; sin is either weakness or disease, and should be met with sympathetic tenderness. Nothing is worth while except sympathy, charity, love, and their companions, trust, hope, courage, fortitude. The positive reactions are being selected because of their superior efficiency for the conditions of civilized life.[21]

[21] A study of the origin, function, and future of religion will be found in the author's book, A Psychological Study of Religion, Macmillan, 1912.

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